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**Coalition Strategy in Complex Conflicts
The Strategic Behaviour of Three NATO-States in Afghanistan 2003-2008**

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Coalition Strategy in Complex Conflicts:

The Strategic Behaviour of Three NATO-States in Afghanistan 2003-2008

Degree:

PhD

Department of War Studies

SSPP

King's College London

Candidate:

Tor-Erik Hanssen

Abstract:

Two of the main challenges in contemporary strategy are the challenges of complex conflicts and the increased reliance on alliances and coalitions. This study explores the challenges of coalition strategy in the complex conflict of Afghanistan through the strategic behaviour of three NATO-states, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Norway from 2003 to 2008. The study argues that the use of alliances and coalitions is and will remain one of the most important features of contemporary strategy. Given the size and character of contemporary coalitions and alliances, an essential part of any coalition's strategy both in development and execution will reside with a coalition's lesser members. Understanding how these lesser coalition members develop and implement strategy will be of great importance to the effectiveness of contemporary and future coalitions.

The three states analysed in this study are the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Norway, three states who faced similar challenges in Afghanistan. The strategic behaviour of these cases is analysed through the lens of strategic theory from which the framework of analysis was developed.

The study found that the three states' interpretations of ISAF's aims were remarkably different and that this impacted their strategies significantly. The study also found that as the lesser coalition partners' purpose behind joining the coalition was only indirectly linked to the complex conflict of Afghanistan itself, the lesser members struggled to generate the political involvement that is crucial to the development of a clear and relevant strategy. Further, the study also found that this lack of political involvement had its main source in the lack of proper strategic institutions and procedures in each state's civil-military relations structure, but was also clearly impacted by the states' strategic thinking. The study challenges certain elements of traditional and contemporary theory on strategy and civil-military relations with respect to the lack of realism in strategic theory and an over-emphasis on structures in current civil-military relations theory.

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Note on abbreviations, language and references:

This dissertation is written in the field of strategic studies, a field riddled with abbreviations and acronyms. For reasons of fluidity, I have chosen to introduce the full term initially and then subsequently provide only the acronym or abbreviation. A list of the abbreviations used is provided in the introduction.

The study involved the use of primary sources in four languages. For the sake of clarity and uniformity, as particularly Norwegian is a little known language, I have endeavoured to use English versions where more than one version of a text was available and I have provided English translations where necessary instead of using the original language. All translations from Norwegian, Dutch and German sources are done by me, except as otherwise stated.

I have followed the reference guide when it comes to the footnotes and bibliography, but given the nature of some sources I have made some additions. For the sake of reliability, I have provided the titles as they were published although this was sometimes contrary to the accepted British style. The British and Dutch parliamentary hearings have two sets of page numbers, one for the committee's own conclusion and one set for the actual evidence hearings. In the references, the pages referred to in the evidence hearings will be referred to as prefix 'ev.p' or 'ev.pp.'.

Abbreviations:

ADZ:	Afghan Development Zone (ISAF and local Afghan)
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP:	Afghan National Police
AOR:	Area of Operations
ASF	Afghan Security Forces
ASF:	Afghan Security Forces (ANA, ANP and NDS)
BDD	British Defence Doctrine
CDS	United Kingdom: Chief of Defence Staff The Netherlands: Commander Netherlands' Armed Forces (<i>Commandant der Strijdkrachten</i>) also referred to as the Chief of the Defence Staff, or Chief of Defence.
CGS	Chief of the General Staff (United Kingdom)
CHOD	Chief of Defence
CIMIC	Civil Military Co-Operation
CMR	Civil-Military Relations
CO	Cabinet Office (United Kingdom)
COIN	Counter Insurgency
DDR:	De-Armament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration
DEA	Drug Enforcement Agency
DFID	The Department for International Development
EBA	Effects Based Approach (United Kingdom)
EBO	Effects Based Operations
FCO	United Kingdom's Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FFOD	The Norwegian Joint Operations Doctrine (<i>Forsvarets Fellesoperative Doktrine</i>)
HEG	United Kingdom Helmand Executive Group
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KMNB:	(ISAF) Kabul Multinational Brigade
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCW	Network Centric Warfare
NDD	The Netherlands' National Defence Doctrine
NDS	(Afghan) National Directorate of Security
NEC	Network Enabling Capability (United Kingdom)
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NSID	United Kingdom Cabinet Committee for National Security, International Relations and Development
NSS	National Security Strategy for the United Kingdom (2008)
OEF:	Operation Enduring Freedom
OMF	Opposing Military Forces (Taliban, Al Qaeda, Lashgar e Taiba, HIG, and local armed opposition)
PM	Prime Minister
POLAD	Political Advisor

PRT:	ISAF and OEF Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSO	Peace support operations
QIP	Quick Impact Projects
PUS	United Kingdom MoD Permanent Under Secretary
RC	ISAF Regional Command
RNIA	Royal Netherlands Army
SDR	Strategic Defence Review, United Kingdom 1997
SMO	The Netherlands' Steering Group for Military Operations (<i>Stuurgroep Militaire Operaties</i>)
SVW	The Netherlands' Steering Group for Security Co-operation and Reconstruction (<i>Stuurgroep Veiligheidssamenwerking en Development</i>)
TFU:	Task Force Uruzgan (the Netherlands)
UK	The United Kingdom
US	The United States of America
USAF	United States Air Force

Chapter I:

Introduction

By late 2008 and early 2009 it was evident that the strategies employed by NATO in Afghanistan had failed. The means, however skilfully employed by the alliance, had not produced the desired political outcome. The NATO alliance entered the Afghanistan theatre in August 2003 and took over responsibility for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). From its initial and limited deployment in Kabul and through its subsequent ambitious expansion, the NATO alliance's stated political purpose was to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a lair of international terrorism and extremism.¹ Its political aims were to establish a central government unimpeded by radical Islam, and capable of providing credible security and basic services to the Afghan people. A comparison of the stated purpose and aims to the actual situation on the ground by the end of 2008 and early 2009 demonstrated the failure of NATO's Afghanistan strategy. In fact, by the end of 2008 both NATO and United Nations reports argued that the overall security situation in Afghanistan had deteriorated to a level where large parts of Afghanistan had slipped from the hands of the central government.² The number of security incidents in Afghanistan had increased six-fold since 2003, there were serious problems with establishing proper governance in large parts of the country, and 40% of Afghanistan was deemed inaccessible to humanitarian or civilian aid.³ NATO members publicly expressed concerns at the level of corruption that permeated all levels of government.⁴ Even the Afghan government's hold on Kabul province and the capital itself appeared to be in doubt. By early 2009 the means and methods employed by NATO did not realise the stated political purpose and aims.

¹ COMISAF, "Commander's Initial Assessment," (ISAF HQ/US Forces Afghanistan, 2009), p. 1-1.

² UNSC, "United Nations Security Council Resolution 1833," ed. United Nations Security Council (New York 2008); COMISAF, "Commander's Initial Assessment," p. 1-1.

³ UNSC, "Report of the Security Council Mission to Afghanistan, 21 to 28 November 2008," (New York: United Nations Security Council, 2008). p. 3

⁴ Secretary of State MoD Barth Eide, Espen, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission? [" in *Opening address 42nd Leangkollen Conference* (Oslo: Norwegian Atlantic Committee, 2007); Rt Hon John Hutton, "Speech to the IISS 11 November 2008," in *Remembrance Day Conference at IISS*, ed. IISS (London: IISS, 2008).

The failure of NATO's strategies in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008 also becomes evident when analysing the behaviour of the members of the NATO-alliance by early 2009. The alliance was divided in its understanding of the situation in Afghanistan, both with respect to what means and methods were necessary to achieve the stated political aims, as well as how to use force in Afghanistan. The result was a conglomerate of diverging objectives, approaches, and a rift between members willing to commit troops to the troubled RC South and those unwilling to do so.⁵ By late 2008, politicians in leading NATO-countries would publicly admit their concerns and worries about the strategies pursued thus far, and further describe the situation as a 'stalemate'.⁶ Although NATO-officials maintained that there were elements of the strategies that were successful, the public and many academics questioned whether the NATO-countries had a coherent strategy at all in Afghanistan.⁷ In some cases, security analysts called for a total re-evaluation of the operations in Afghanistan and went so far as to claim that '[t]he clammy odour of defeat is in the air.'⁸

The end of 2008 and beginning of 2009 marked a turning point for the Afghanistan campaign as ISAF and many of its members began a series of national reappraisals of their strategies in Afghanistan, admitting the serious shortcomings of the previous strategies. The United States (US), the leading nation in NATO and in Afghanistan, embarked on a re-evaluation of its Afghanistan policy and its strategy following the inauguration of the Obama administration in January 2009.⁹ The result of this overhaul was six months later to try '....a fundamentally new approach....' with respect to the manner in which the US used force in Afghanistan.¹⁰ The United Kingdom (UK) similarly re-evaluated its Afghanistan and Pakistan strategy in early 2009, and its armed forces came to the conclusion during 2008 that it stood at a

⁵ Robert Gates, "Afghan Q and A," *Survival* 51, no. 1 (2009): p. 81; Rory Stewart in House of Commons Defence Committee, *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, 2007, evidence pages (ev.pp). 33-34.

⁶ "Afghan Q and A," p. 82. Michael Evans, "David Miliband: Nato Troops Stuck in an Afghanistan 'Stalemate,'" *Timesonline* 2009.

⁷ Hew Strachan, "Strategy and the Limitation of War," *Survival* 50, no. 1 (2008); Antonio Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan* (London: Hurst & Company, 2007), p. 206; Corey Flintoff, "Troops May Head to Afghanistan Lacking Strategy," *National Public Radio*, 28 January 2009.

⁸ Julian Lindley-French, "The Way Forward in Afghanistan: Three Views," *Survival* 51, no. 1 (2009): p. 91.

⁹ Mary Louise Kelly, "With New Boss, Gates Shifts Focus to Afghanistan," *National Public Radio*, January 27 2009.

¹⁰ COMISAF, "Commander's Initial Assessment," p. 2-1.

crossroads concerning its outlook and composition in Afghanistan.¹¹ Even smaller nations such as the Netherlands and Norway re-evaluated their strategy in 2009 emphasising that their previous strategy had been flawed, or withdrew their commitments altogether.¹²

Therefore, by early 2009 it was apparent that the strategies employed by the NATO alliance and its constituent states had failed. This study will explore the strategic behaviour leading up to this failure by focusing on the strategic behaviour of three of the alliance members, namely the UK, the Netherlands and Norway, utilising the lens of strategic theory. The failure of the alliance and the individual states in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008 may be examined in the narrow light of the peculiarities of the neo-Taliban insurgency after 2001, making it a unique event. However, it is the premise of this study that the predicament of the NATO partners in Afghanistan highlights a more general challenge of contemporary strategy that is, making strategy within an alliance or coalition in the midst of complex conflicts.¹³ It is with these perspectives I will explore the strategic behaviour of the aforementioned NATO-states in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008.

The Study:

Overall structure

Firstly, the research design of this study will be explained. Thereafter, I explore the theory underpinning the research question and design, and how the four factors of the study were developed. Lastly, the strategic behaviour displayed by the three cases I have selected will be analysed based on the research design and the four factors.

¹¹ HM Government, "UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Way Forward," ed. The Cabinet Office (London: The Stationary Office, 2009). General Sir Richard Dannatt, "Soldier First - Developing the Force," in *RUSI Land Warfare Conference* (London 23 June 2009).

¹² Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009 (*Strategi for Helhetlig Norsk Innsats i Faryab-Provinsen i Afghanistan, Mars 2009*)," ed. Norwegian Government (Oslo: Norwegian Government, 2009).

¹³ John Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency: Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan*, vol. Whitehall Paper no 64, Whitehall Papers (London: The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 2005), p. 20.

The research question

The situation in Afghanistan by the end of 2008 and the challenges of developing strategy in the context of coalitions and the complex conflict of Afghanistan create the foundation for this study's research question: ***What characterised the strategic behaviour of the lesser coalition states, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Norway, in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008?***

As explored below this thesis defines strategy as: The process of utilising force or the threat of force for the purpose of political ends. Strategic behaviour is consequently defined as: '....the behaviour relevant to the threat or actual use of force.'¹⁴ These definitions have implications for the framework of analysis that will be explored below.

The term 'lesser states' will be used to denote any country in a coalition that is not the lead state, in the meaning of a state carrying significantly more influence than other coalition states, and provides a political, military or logistical framework for the use of the rest of the coalition as well as providing a significantly larger contribution in troops and resources than the other coalition states. The UK has been classified a lesser state as its contribution was more comparable to other NATO-states, as compared to the contribution of the US.

Research design and choice of cases:

The study has explored the research question through an exploratory, multiple and holistic case study involving three cases: the UK, the Netherlands and Norway.¹⁵ The context of the case study is the three states' involvement in the operations in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008. The unit of study is the strategic decision-making organisation in the three states, whereas the three states' strategic behaviour constitutes the variable explored. The time frame chosen for this study were the years 2003 to 2008. The start date is thus defined by the time that NATO accepted responsibility for the International Security Assistance Force on August 9th 2003. The end date is marked

¹⁴ CS Gray, *Strategy for Chaos: Revolutions in Military Affairs and the Evidence of History* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), p. 6.

¹⁵ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Fourth ed., vol. 5, Applied Social Research Methods Series (Los Angeles: Sage, 2009), p. 46.

by the re-evaluation of the strategies in Afghanistan by the US, following the presidential elections of that year, re-evaluations that also occurred in the UK and Norway.

The three cases were selected because they shared similar strategic and operational challenges from 2003 to 2008, and accepted responsibilities that made it reasonable to expect them to develop independent strategies in addition to the overall ISAF-strategy. The three states all deployed forces to Afghanistan prior to NATO's involvement and were involved as lesser partners in NATO's accession of responsibility in Afghanistan from 2003. The three states took an active part in all stages of NATO's and ISAF's operations, from the initial focus on Kabul through the four stages of ISAF's expansion which was completed in 2006.¹⁶ The UK, the Netherlands, and Norway all had sole operational responsibility for their respective PRTs in the Helmand, Uruzgan, and Faryab provinces. Their areas of responsibility (AOR) all contained elements of Pashtu population affected by the Taliban insurgency, even though the areas were not affected to the same degree. All three countries had to develop their Afghanistan strategies in competition with other commitments, and their commitments in Afghanistan strained the three nations' armed forces, in particularly their land components, to the point that the Afghanistan deployment was said to have adversely affected other commitments and the general readiness of the armed forces.¹⁷ In addition, the expansion of ISAF's responsibility between 2004 and 2006 and the ensuing increase in military and civilian casualties, led the public opinion in all three states to become more critical of the Afghanistan operations, and it appeared that public opinion in all three countries was split down the middle by 2008 on the question of whether they supported the commitment in Afghanistan.¹⁸ The three countries thus faced similar strategic challenges in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008 and had the opportunity and the scope through their missions to develop independent or additional strategies in their respective areas.

¹⁶ ISAF, "ISAF Troops in Numbers," (International Security Assistance Force, 2007).

¹⁷ James Fergusson, *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan* (London: Bantam, 2008), pp. 136, 214, 32 and 64.

¹⁸ See: Nina Berglund, "Majority Supports Troops in Afghanistan," *Aftenposten (English edition)*, 5 February 2008; Angus Reid Global Monitor, "Dutch Still Divided on Afghanistan Mission," Angus Reid Global Monitor, http://www.angus-reid.com/polls/view/30510/dutch_still_divided_on_afghanistan_mission/.

The three cases were also selected because the UK and the Netherlands are two of Norway's closest allies and viewed as key partners in defence and security issues. This close connection in the field of security and military matters has made it possible for me, a Norwegian officer, to access the material relevant and necessary to study and compare their strategic behaviour between 2003 and 2008. The similarities between the strategic experiences and the strategic organisation of the three cases were not coincidental. The three countries have a long history of defence co-operation, manifested in logistics and procurement co-operation, the establishment of permanent joint units, and the a high degree of operational co-operation. The British and Dutch influence on the Norwegian defence sector was and still is widespread. In the armed forces, but particularly in the Norwegian MoD, the UK is a source of inspiration in the fields of organisation and operational practices.¹⁹ From the Norwegian perspective, the Netherlands and the UK were during the period in question described as two of its '....close allies....' with whom they have '....shared values....'.²⁰ This led to the development of the so called 'North Sea Strategy' where the three countries established co-operation in the fields of defence and procurement. In turn, this led to the operational co-operation between the Netherlands and Norway in the shape of a joint fighter squadron deployed to ISAF, and also in the permanent exchange of liaison officers to the respective centres of doctrine in the two countries. The Netherlands and the UK have the history of the joint UK-NL amphibious brigade, whereas Norway's mechanised rapid reaction forces have been integrated in the permanent GE-NL Corps. The operational co-operation is equally close as Norway has traditionally sought to be a part of the British operational organisation as evident in Kosovo, Iraq and stage 2 of the ISAF enlargement in RC North in 2005. The Dutch and British contingents have similarly been part of RC South since 2006. The close connection between the three countries made a study of them easier in terms of access to the relevant actors

¹⁹ J Børresen, G Gjeseth, and R Tamnes, *Norsk Forsvarshistorie: Allianseforsvar I Endring, Bind 5 [Norwegian Defence History: Alliance Defence in Change, Vol. 5]*, 5 vols., vol. Bind 5, Norsk Forsvarshistorie Bind 1-5 (Bergen, Norway: Eide forlag, 2004), p. 289 (caption) and 310; For an example of British influence on Dutch organisation see: Daniel Korski and Richard Gowan, "Can the Eu Rebuild Failing States? A Review of Europe's Civilian Capacities," (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, 2009), p. 47.

²⁰ MoD, "*Stortingsproposisjon Nr 48 2007-2008* (Norwegian Government White Paper)," ed. Ministry of Defence, (Oslo 2008), p. 31. ('*Nære allierte*'); Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper No 1, 2005-2006 ", ed. Norwegian MoD (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 2006), para. 2-11 (verdifelleskap); Norwegian MoD, "Strength and Relevance", (Oslo: Norwegian Department of Defence, 2004), p. 12.

and documents in the strategic processes, and accessibility to personnel with operational experience on the ground.

In addition to the strategic challenges and access to the relevant actors, the three countries share similar constitutional platforms. They are all parliamentary democracies, where the legislature creates both the basis of the political executive and at the same time provides a check to it. The UK, the Netherlands, and Norway are all stable democracies in which the principle of civilian supremacy over the armed forces is well established in the process of making strategy. As will be demonstrated in the analysis, the formal structures of strategy making in the three states were also similar from the outset, with an integrated MoD as the pivotal force in strategic planning and decision-making in order to make strategic decision-making more effective and cost effective.²¹ The foundations of the strategy making in the Netherlands, Norway and the UK were consequently built along similar lines and created a platform from which their strategies could be explored.

Lastly, the three cases were selected because the three countries' potentially offered different approaches to strategic behaviour in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008. Although the three states had similar formal structures on which to develop their strategies, in that their societal, political and military platforms resembled each other, their way of approaching the problems of complex conflicts as Afghanistan was different. The history of the three countries' involvement in international crisis management and insurgency in many ways represented three different levels of experience and three different approaches to the challenges of Afghanistan. Prior to Afghanistan, the UK had been more involved in counterinsurgency operations (COIN) than international crisis management. Its participation in international crisis management and traditional peacekeeping was intermittent prior to 1992, whereas the country's decolonisation experience and the troubles in Northern Ireland forced it to engage in COIN for the better part of the twentieth century. The UK was subsequently

²¹ See: "Norwegian Government White Paper No 45: 00/01 (*Stortingsproposisjon Nr. 45, 2000-2001*) 'the Reorganisation of the Armed Forces in the Period 2002-2005'," ed. MoD (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Defence (*Forsvarsdepartementet*), 2001)., www.defensie.nl/organisatie/defensie/militaire_leiding, and www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/Organisation

willing to define the conflict of Afghanistan in terms of an insurgency early on and debate whether its counterinsurgency experience was relevant to Afghanistan.²²

In contrast, Norway had throughout the twentieth century nurtured the role of a small state in terms of hard power issues such as strategy and use of force. Its experience prior to Afghanistan was limited to international crisis management in the shape of PSO and peacemaking, where it had been one of the main contributors since 1956. It consequently attempted to define its efforts in Afghanistan in these terms rather than COIN.²³ Norwegian strategic concepts differed from the British in its understanding of the conflict as well as in its perception on the use of force. Norwegian perception emphasised civilian rather than military resources, and employed UN concepts such as integrated mission and PSO rather than the perspective of counterinsurgency.²⁴ This tendency was exemplified by the fact that Norway by the end of 2008 had not developed any specific doctrines for COIN but relied on sundry high intensity and PSO manuals.²⁵

The Netherlands occupied a third position in its experience in dealing with international crisis management and insurgency. It had been involved in colonial counterinsurgency from late 1870s to 1949 in Indonesia and then in PSO from 1956.²⁶ The Netherlands used the terms of insurgency and counterinsurgency from an early stage, but argued for a different interpretation of the terms and a different emphasis.²⁷ The Dutch interpretation, or 'the Dutch Approach', to COIN emphasised the co-ordination and the synergy of civilian and military resources, and attempted to combine

²² House of Commons Defence Committee, *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, 2006, p. 40; HM Government, "UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Way Forward," AfPak Policy, pp. 18-20.

²³ Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency*, pp. 4-5; Strøm Erichsen Minister of Defence, Anne-Grete, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan (*Vårt Engasjement in Afghanistan*)," in *Afghanistan Conference Oslo Military Society* (Oslo: Oslo Military Society 2008), Opening paragraph.

²⁴ E Barth Eide et al., "Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations," in *Independent study for the Expanded UN ECHA Core Group* (The Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, 2005).

²⁵ See: (FSTS) Norwegian Staff College, "Norwegian Defence Joint Operations Doctrine," (Oslo: FST (Norwegian Defence Staff), 2007), pp. 25-28; Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?," pp.2-3.

²⁶ Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, "The Roots of Dutch Counterinsurgency - Balancing and Integrating Military and Civilian Efforts from Aceh to Uruzgan," in *The U.S. Army and Irregular Warfare 1775-2007: Selected Papers from the 2007 Conference of Army Historians* (Washington: Conference of Army Historians, 2008), pp. 125-27.

²⁷ Robert H.E. Gooren, "Soldiers in Unfamiliar Places: The Dutch Approach," *Military Review* 86 no. 2 March- April (2006): pp. 54-56.

restrictive use of force with cultural sensitivity.²⁸ To what extent this actually represented a unique approach to COIN was debated and will be discussed below.²⁹

The three countries of the UK, the Netherlands, and Norway were selected on the basis of their similar strategic challenges in Afghanistan, their close relationship which provided access to relevant material, their strategic organisation, and their different approaches to the strategic challenges. The three countries thus provide a useful framework for the examination of the strategic behaviour among the lesser coalition members in Afghanistan conflict between 2003 and 2008.

Limitations

Although the relationship between the three countries was close, Norway as the smallest nation placed more emphasis on the relationship than did the Netherlands and the UK. The Norwegian desire to emulate the other states was not necessarily reciprocated, as the UK naturally would find more influence from the US than from other countries. Indeed, the post World War II history of Anglo-Norwegian relations in the field of security, defence, and strategy was characterised by a former Norwegian diplomat as a story of ‘...unreciprocated love...’.³⁰ Another obvious limitation in comparing these cases was the size of the strategic means available to the three states. Although the conflicts after the Cold War have not been of an industrial or total nature, the Western response to the conflicts have been lengthy, and of an expeditionary and technologically advanced nature. Consequently, the size of the military and civilian means matter and will enable and constrict the development of strategy in each country. The three countries were not lead members of the coalition in Afghanistan 2003 to 2008, as their efforts were continuously dwarfed by that of the US; however, the difference in size between the lesser countries of the ISAF-coalition was

²⁸ C.J. Chivers, "Dutch Soldiers Stress Restraint in Afghanistan," *The New York Times*, 6 April 2007; Gooren, "Soldiers in Unfamiliar Places: The Dutch Approach," pp. 55-56; (MFA) Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," ed. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, and Ministry of Defence (The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation of the Netherlands, Department for Communication, 2006), .

²⁹ Zaalberg, "The Roots of Dutch Counterinsurgency", pp.121-22 and 28.

³⁰ Sverre Jervell, "*Norsk Utenriks- Og Sikkerhetspolitikk I En Ny Tid. Norge Og Det Atlantiske Oppbruddet Etter Den Kalde Krigen.* [Norwegian Foreign and Security Policy in a New Age. Norway and the Atlantic Division after the Cold War]," [[Norwegian Foreign and Security Policy in a New Age. Norway and the Atlantic Division after the Cold War].] *The Norwegian Atlantic Committee Internet Texts*, no. 15 (2003).

considerable. The UK's military means were roughly ten times the size of the equivalent Norwegian means in its defence budget, manpower, and troops in Afghanistan during the period, whereas similar figures for the Netherlands was approximately one third that of the British.³¹

Validity and reliability

The three cases were examined using a qualitative methodology. The four factors deemed relevant to strategic behaviour during the period was explored through studies of relevant official documents and available literature on the subject.

Validity of the study was sought through the use of multiple sources of evidence by studying the strategic discourse, national strategy documents, doctrines, and operational practices at the same levels in each of the three countries. Further validity was sought through a comparison of the data and alternative explanations across the three cases. However, given my methodological standpoint, the three cases were not used to construct general theories on the strategic behaviour of lesser coalition partners. Reliability in the study was established through the use of public and published sources, but the selection were limited to sources where the purpose was to explain strategic reasoning to an audience involved in the strategic decision-making or expected to understand the use of force. Sources aimed at a broader audience were only included as far as they explained the strategic reasoning in detail.

Methodological challenges

The methodological challenges of my approach concerned the use and the study of the central terms of the study, as well as the use of theory to establish my analytical framework to explore the characteristics of the strategic behaviour in the UK, the Netherlands, and Norway.

The general problem was how to study and approach the subject of strategy. This study uses as its core that the research question is addressing political and strategic behaviour, and therefore a study of human behaviour in the context of political conflict. How this behaviour is best studied depends on how one perceives the nature of political conflict. This study adopted the view that the nature of political conflict is

³¹ IISS, "The Military Balance 2008," (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2008); ISAF, "ISAF Troops in Numbers," (International Security Assistance Force, 2008).

best analysed through an approach first described by the German military theorist Carl von Clausewitz. The starting point of this view is that war and conflict should be seen as a violent social interaction between human adversaries.³² As a result severe limitations may be inferred on how to measure and predict outcomes when studying events involving human behaviour.³³ This means that this study approached the research questions qualitatively and understood the subject of strategy as something that cannot be measured in absolute and objective terms, but rather should be interpreted in a human and subjective context.³⁴

The analytical framework for analysing the characteristics will be developed through a study of existing strategic theory, with an emphasis on the challenges of developing strategy in the context of a coalition, faced with the challenges of complex conflicts. Utilising this theory, a definition of strategy and four main factors for characterising the strategic behaviour of the three states will be deduced.

³² Carl von Clausewitz and Werner Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk, 19 Aufl / Vollständige Ausg. im Urtext mit historisch-kritischer Würdigung von Werner Hahlweg* ed.(Bonn: Ferdinand Dümmlers 1991), p. 191 and 303.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-99 and 288-93.

³⁴ Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 3rd edition ed.(Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 15-16.

Chapter II: Theoretical Framework

This project poses the question of what characterised the strategic behaviour of three lesser NATO-states involved in the Afghanistan operations between 2003 and 2008. The question is part of the broad, multidisciplinary field of strategic studies. Within the field of strategic studies there are no universally accepted definitions of either strategy, strategic behaviour or what factors are relevant to analyse this research question. Whilst there is no agreement as to what factors are relevant to the study of strategy, certain themes and problems recur in the literature, and it is through a discussion of what I believe are the most important themes that I will explore and establish the terms of strategy and strategic behaviour.

Having established a definition of the terms strategy and strategic behaviour, I will explore the impact of coalition and alliance warfare on contemporary strategy and the role and influence of lesser coalition states. Thereafter, I will explore the impact of complex conflicts on contemporary strategy. I will then revisit the general theories on strategy and strategic behaviour, and use these three theoretical perspectives to deduce the relevant factors for an analysis of what characterised the strategic behaviour of the three NATO-states in Afghanistan. Having deduced what factors are relevant to explore and analyse the problem; I will explain how each factor will be used and operationalised.

Strategy – a definition

The term strategy, and its derivative strategic behaviour, has become a term with wide usage. In the words of Michael Howard, strategy is ‘...used to describe the use of available resources to gain any objective, from winning at bridge to selling soap,...’.³⁵ From having a narrow military definition, the term strategy has become widely used in colloquial language, and in the fields of business studies and political science. The term strategy has become so broadly used and so widely defined that some authors argue that it has lost its meaning and if not carefully defined strategy is a term more likely to confuse than clarify.³⁶

³⁵ M. Howard, *The Causes of Wars and Other Essays* (London: Unwin, 1984), p. 36.

³⁶ Hew Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," *Survival* 47, no. 3 (2005): pp. 34 and 52.

The definition of strategy employed in my analysis is that strategy is the process of utilising force or the threat of force for the purpose of political ends.³⁷ This definition and the reasoning behind it will be further explored in each of the four factors. Strategic behaviour is defined as ‘....the behaviour relevant to the threat or actual use of force.’³⁸ Strategic behaviour is understood as the decisions and actions taken by the three countries concerning the use of force, but does not include an analysis of whether or not the strategies themselves were effective. These decisions and actions are influenced and shaped by the factors, but also influencing the factors themselves, creating a dynamic and complex relationship between strategic behaviour and the factors of analysis.³⁹ This definition necessarily draws upon the contentious debate about strategic culture and its relationship to strategic behaviour and whether behaviour can be separated from culture, which will be further analysed under the factor strategic outlook below.⁴⁰

Strategy, Coalitions and Alliances

An analysis of contemporary strategic behaviour would be incomplete without including the impact of alliances and coalitions. The reliance of coalitions and alliances has been one of the most significant features of strategy and the use of force in the Western world throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The world’s greatest military power, the US, has not launched a major military operation since the Second World without attempting to establish a working coalition or an alliance before using force and the need for coalitions is now fully embedded in its national and military strategies.⁴¹ To smaller and medium sized powers coalition operations are no longer described in terms of options, but rather as a prerequisite for the use of force. A significant military power like the UK argues that it would be difficult to imagine

³⁷ C. S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 17; Carl von Clausewitz and Werner Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege*, pp. 169 and 243; Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," p. 52.

³⁸ Gray, *Strategy for Chaos: Revolutions in Military Affairs and the Evidence of History*, p. 6.

³⁹ Iver B. Neumann and Henrikki Heikka, "Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice: The Social Roots of Nordic Defence," *Cooperation and Conflict: Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 40, no. 1 (2005): pp. 10-11.

⁴⁰ See: Colin S. Gray, *Strategy and History : Essays on Theory and Practice*, Cass Series: Strategy and History (London: Routledge, 2006), chapter 10, ; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," *International Security* 19, no. 4 (1995).

⁴¹ USDOD, "National Defense Strategy," ed. Department of Defense (Washington: Department of Defense, 2008), p.. 5 and 21; "Quadrennial Defense Review Report," ed. Department of Defense (Washington DC: Department of Defense, 2006), p. 92.

British land operations without a working coalition.⁴² For even smaller Western states, operations beyond its immediate survival are unimaginable outside the framework of an alliance or a coalition.

This reliance among Western nations on coalitions is due to the increased importance of international institutions and the reliance on those institutions and organisations to establish security both inside and outside the Western World after 1945, particularly after 1989.⁴³ Following this logic, coalitions become vehicles through which the states can wield influence in institutions or organisations and gain ‘....a seat at the table.’⁴⁴ The internationalisation of security has led to a view where unilateral use of force is less acceptable and the use of international coalitions legitimise the use of force; a large coalition being an expression of international unity and legitimacy for the use of force. There are also more mundane and practical reasons for the extensive use of alliances. Particularly since 1989 the Western states have significantly reduced the size of its military forces and what forces remain are expensive and not readily risked.⁴⁵ For all these reasons, coalitions have become essential to the use of force in the Western world, and analysing Western strategy in the early twenty-first century without including the impact of coalitions would provide an incomplete and inadequate picture of contemporary strategy.

The use of coalitions in contemporary operations brings with it an aspect of sharing political and military risk, cost, capabilities and casualties, but the reliance on coalitions also presents strategic thinkers with a paradox.⁴⁶ In order to be able to use force internationally Western states need coalitions, but coalitions are not the most effective way of employing force in a limited strategic or military sense. From a strategic point of view what makes coalitions politically desirable, the participation of many states, is the factor that makes them unwieldy and ineffective as instruments of force in contemporary conflicts.

⁴² General Sir Peter Wall, "Alliance Perspectives on Current Operations," in *RUSI Land Warfare Conference* (London 23 June 2009).

⁴³ Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations - Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004), p. 36; Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy."

⁴⁴ Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force - the Art of War in the Modern World* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), p. 301.

⁴⁵ Mark Schissler, "Coalition Warfare - More Power or More Problems?," (Newport, RI: Naval War College, 1993), p. 11.

⁴⁶ Smith, *The Utility of Force*, p. 301.

The paradox of the need for coalitions and alliances on the one side and the strategic ineffectiveness inherent in them is in itself not revolutionary, but the international situation and the character of contemporary conflict presents the dilemma in a new setting. The traditional theories on strategy and coalitions do not adequately describe the challenges of coalition warfare in contemporary conflicts and are consistently written from the perspective of the lead nation and downplay the role of the lesser nations. Thus they do not sufficiently explain the challenges of NATO's coalition strategies in Afghanistan. It is important to revisit the strategic theory on coalition and alliance warfare and see it the light of the challenges of contemporary conflict in Afghanistan. In order to do so I will briefly discuss how strategic theory has traditionally balanced the dilemma of coalition and alliance effectiveness, what remedies have been employed to increase effectiveness, and then explain how these remedies are less applicable in contemporary conflicts such as Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008. I will then illustrate how the theories' traditional focus on lead nations is less relevant to understand the question of coalition effectiveness in contemporary conflicts such as Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008. An examination of strategic behaviour in Afghanistan and contemporary conflicts would be incomplete without examining it in the light of coalition strategy and including the strategies of the lesser members of contemporary coalitions.

Definitions:

Alliances and coalitions are as old as organised warfare itself, and created out of a desire to strengthen two or more states' position, in general or *vis-a-vis* a common adversary.⁴⁷ An alliance or coalition may further states' interests as it offers increased legitimacy or moral standing, as well as increased military and civilian resources in the deterrence of an adversary or in pursuit of an actual conflict. Most contemporary writers and official doctrines distinguish between two forms of collaborative warfare: coalitions and alliances. Alliances are described by the official US doctrines as a long-term security relationship emanating from '....a formal agreement (e.g., treaty) between two or more nations for broad, long-term objectives that further the common interests

⁴⁷ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner, 2nd revision ed.(London: Penguin, 1972), pp. 54-57.

of the members.⁴⁸ Alliances normally have formal and agreed procedures of decision-making and an organisation or bureaucracy, as well as often having common policies, doctrines, training, and to some extent streamlined military forces. Alliances are established between states that share common perspectives and values, and their long-term and deterrent aspects are emphasised.⁴⁹ Coalitions on the other hand are normally described as ‘...an *ad hoc* arrangement between two or more nations for common action.’⁵⁰ Coalitions are formed to deal with an immediate crisis or conflict and to deal with specific issues rather than creating long-term bonds between states.

The benefits of alliances and coalitions

Any examination of the dilemma of alliances and coalitions and their effectiveness commences with the question of states’ interests. Alliances and coalitions are formed by states who find it in their interest to join forces. These interests do not necessarily overlap, and the degree to which they do, determines whether the states form a coalition or an alliance. Interests within an alliance or coalition will often diverge outside the purpose of the formation of the alliance or coalition, and alliances and coalitions do not have to be based on friendships between the states.⁵¹ Large coalitions or alliances have different degrees of common interests, sometimes creating different tiers or levels of unity within the same alliance.⁵² Interests are not static factors, however, but may change through the participation in alliances, making alliances and coalitions instruments for influencing the participants, not merely vehicles for the realisation of their interests.

The clearest benefits to joining alliances and coalitions are the increased resources and the sharing of the burdens. As pointed out by Henri de Jomini, a state’s interests may be significantly enhanced by the addition of allies, either through the additional troops that can be provided or the additional distraction it provides to the

⁴⁸ USJCS, "Joint Publication 01 - Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States: Incorporating Change 1," ed. Joint Chiefs of Staff(Washington: DOD, 2007), pp. xviii-xix.

⁴⁹ Robert H. Scales jr., "Trust, Not Technology, Sustains Coalitions " *Parameters* 1998, no. Winter (1998).

⁵⁰ USJCS, "Joint Publication 01 - Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States: Incorporating Change 1," pp. xviii-xix.

⁵¹ Wayne A. Silkett, "Alliance and Coalition Warfare," *Parameters* 1993, no. Summer (1993).

⁵² Eliot A. Cohen, "Churchill and Coalition Strategy in World War II," in *Grand Strategies in War and Peace*, ed. Paul Kennedy(London: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 47ff; Jeffrey W. Yaeger, "Coalition Warfare: Surrendering Sovereignty," *Military Review*, no. November (1992): p. 62; Scales jr., "Trust, Not Technology, Sustains Coalitions ".

common adversary.⁵³ Jomini's focus on the benefits of alliances and coalitions came after extensive service both against and with coalitions during the Revolutionary Wars and represents a positive view in strategic theory of the use of alliances and coalitions. To a small state, the advantages of additional resources will often be the most important reason to join an alliance or coalition as it enables a state to advance its interests through actions that would otherwise be impossible. To a larger state, additional partners may enhance an alliance or a coalition's capacity in the form of numbers or their capabilities to carry out certain operations either through their additional training, experience or equipment.⁵⁴ The resources may not always take the form of military forces or capability, but also by financial and logistical support provided to ease the burden of other nations. Forming an alliance or coalition also provides easier access to many areas of interest that states within a coalition or alliance may have. Rather than having the challenge of a forcible entry into an area, a coalition may provide peaceful access and facilities enabling operations.⁵⁵

The actual resources may however not be the most important part of Western coalitions. The more recent literature, published in the wake of the Gulf War coalitions and NATO's operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan emphasises the legal and moral benefits of establishing alliances and coalitions.⁵⁶ Historically many coalitions welcome partners with either limited financial or military capacity.⁵⁷ As noted by Thucydides an important aspect of alliances and coalitions is the enhanced legitimacy and moral standing the joining together of many states bring with it. A large coalition or alliance provides legitimacy in the eyes of international opinion and freedom of action that unilateral action seldom has.⁵⁸ Within a coalition or alliance a large number of members also help to share the intangible burdens of political and military risks: the pressures of domestic public opinion as well as the actual casualties in the operations.

⁵³ Baron de Jomini, *The Art of War*, ed. Thomas E. Griess and Jay Luvaas, trans. G.H. Mendell and W.P. Craighill, Reprint of 1862 edition ed., The West Point Military Library (Westport CT: Greenwood Press Publishers), p. 16.

⁵⁴ Scales jr., "Trust, Not Technology, Sustains Coalitions " para: Alliances and Coalitions.

⁵⁵ Schissler, "Coalition Warfare - More Power or More Problems?," p. 7.

⁵⁶ Riscassi, "Principles for Coalition Warfare."; Scales jr., "Trust, Not Technology, Sustains Coalitions ".

⁵⁷ Cohen, "Churchill and Coalition Strategy in World War II," pp. 60-61.

⁵⁸ Wesley K. Clark, *Waging Modern War : Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, New ed.(Oxford: PublicAffairs, 2002), p. 426.

Alliance and coalition ineffectiveness

The benefits of coalition or alliance are offset against their perceived ineffectiveness and weaknesses in action. Many strategic theorists have approached the subject of alliance and coalition warfare with a sense of scepticism and mistrust. Whereas Jomini adopted a practical view and emphasised the benefits of alliances and coalitions, Carl von Clausewitz recognised the need for coalitions but emphasised their weaknesses rather than exploring their strengths.⁵⁹ Ever the political realist and the strategic idealist, Clausewitz viewed the interests of the individual states in the coalition as the source of its strength or weakness. A coalition's effectiveness depended on the degree to which the coalition partners pursued their '....independent interest....' or subordinated their own interests to that of the whole coalition.⁶⁰ The degree to which the narrow interests of a country were subordinated to the wider objectives was contingent on the degree of friendship existing between the coalition partners, and Clausewitz was not overly optimistic of this occurring. Clausewitz's writings reflect the scepticism of later strategic theorists and set the parameters of the military debate, as opposed to the political debate, on alliance and coalition warfare. To the extent that coalitions were discussed explicitly in Clausewitz's works he underscored their weaknesses and the opportunities they offered a cunning enemy able to exploit divisions. This critical view of alliances and coalitions has been maintained by many scholars today. Colin Spencer Gray in his *Modern Strategy* reiterated the Clausewitzian view. While discussing alliances and coalitions he afforded the greater part of his analysis to the weaknesses and inherent military ineffectiveness inherent in them, rather than their strengths. Although he acknowledged the strategic significance of alliances and coalitions, he adopted the Clausewitzian perspective of their vulnerability to a cunning adversary. To Gray, conflicts of the twentieth century illustrate that '....the garnering of allies need not augment strength overall' and that allies are '....both a curse and a blessing.'⁶¹

Both Clausewitz's and Gray's views on coalition and alliance warfare are perhaps best interpreted as illustrating the struggle between strategy as an ideal and strategy in practice. Although Clausewitz was most interested in how to divide enemy coalitions,

⁵⁹ Hew Strachan, *Clausewitz's on War: A Biography* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2007), pp. 37-38.

⁶⁰ Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, pp. 875 and 907.

⁶¹ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, pp. 167-69.

he also clearly recognised the need for coalitions in practice. In fact, when trying to illustrate his strategic and operational thoughts in practice, Clausewitz used a fictitious coalition against France as the basis of his plan.⁶² Clausewitz was also overly pessimistic about the resilience of coalitions even in his own day. France was defeated by coalitions in both 1813-1814 and in 1815, and states were able to see past their own narrow interests although Clausewitz did not highlight it. He himself praised the Russian Tsar for subordinating his troops to other coalition members, and his own mentor Gneisenau risked his army in the Waterloo campaign by advancing towards Wellington rather than retreat after initial defeats.⁶³ Gray arrives at his conclusion about the weaknesses of alliance and coalition warfare after focusing on the challenges of the Axis powers during World War II and the opportunities they provided their adversaries, rather than the ultimately successful set of coalitions and alliances of the Western allies.⁶⁴ To both authors alliances and coalitions are necessary evils, and the practical challenges of keeping them together are at odds with the ideal conduct of war and strategy.

The explanation for Clausewitz's and Gray's instinctive scepticism is obvious. The necessities of alliance and coalition warfare go against all established and ideal principles of war and strategy.⁶⁵ Most lists of principles start with the need for establishing clear and unambiguous political and strategic aims and the maintaining of these aims throughout the war. Given that alliances and coalitions are formed by independent states, this principle is rarely achievable. Each state has its own understanding of what the purpose and the aims should be, and although the states may agree on the overall purpose of an alignment, the more immediate aims and particularly the methods employed to reach the goals may historically cause differences.⁶⁶ The final strategic purpose and aims may be less ambitious or clear than ideally desired and the organisation of the use of force may differ from what a narrow military perspective of strategy may view as desirable.⁶⁷ Connected to the principle of clear aims is the principle of unity of command. The conduct of war and strategy

⁶² Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, p. 930.

⁶³ *Ibid.* Book VIII, ch. 9; Strachan, *Clausewitz's on War: A Biography*, p. 63.

⁶⁴ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, pp. 168-69.

⁶⁵ Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War* (London: Routledge, 1991), pp. 1-2; Clark, *Waging Modern War : Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, p. 423.

⁶⁶ Maurice Matloff, "Allied Strategy in Europe," in *Makers of Modern Strategy*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Press, 1986), p. 678.

⁶⁷ Kent Roberts Greenfield, *American Strategy in World War II: A Reconsideration*, Second print ed. (Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing, 1982), p. 16.

should be directed from one source, with decisions emanating from one body. In relation to alliance and coalition warfare this creates serious challenges as states are reluctant to relinquish sovereignty over vital instruments such as the use of force and its military forces.⁶⁸ This reluctance may be symbolic, but also due to the prospect of losing control over the actual use of force and its consequences.⁶⁹ Historically, unity of command is rarely achieved in coalitions, and unity of effort is only possible at the highest levels.⁷⁰ Instead constant negotiations and compromise between alliance or coalition members becomes the order of the day.⁷¹

Measured against the principles of war, alliances and coalitions traditionally suffer from ineffectiveness due to the problems of interoperability between military forces. Alliance and coalition operations are difficult to reconcile with the principles of economy of force and simplicity of plans, as well as flexibility and mobility. Alliance and coalition warfare entail streamlining forces from different states with different equipment, doctrines, and ways of operating. Add to this the challenges of combined logistics, different languages, culture and mindsets, and it is not difficult to understand the operational challenges of alliance and coalition warfare, and why alliances and coalitions are viewed as cumbersome, costly, and ineffective by many strategic theorists and military professionals.

Remedies against coalition and alliance ineffectiveness

The dilemma between the need for coalitions and their inherent ineffectiveness has been remedied in various ways. Because alliances and coalitions are formed in the common interests of the states augmenting their own resources and standing, the first remedy discussed is thorough negotiations on purpose and aims in advance of actual operations and a 'harmonization' of the states' divergent political and military aims.⁷² This harmonisation requires a unique leadership from all parties involved. Although the larger states naturally carry more weight, smaller states may contribute vital features to coalitions such as international standing, geographical access, or key resources, which may provide them more relative influence. The leadership of successful alliances and

⁶⁸ Yaeger, "Coalition Warfare: Surrendering Sovereignty," p. 52.

⁶⁹ Cohen, 'Churchill and Coalition Strategy in World War II', p. 45.

⁷⁰ Riscassi, "Principles for Coalition Warfare," pp. 66-67.

⁷¹ Clark, *Waging Modern War : Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat*, p. 425.

⁷² Silkett, "Alliance and Coalition Warfare," para: Goals.

coalitions is characterised by persuasion and negotiations at both political and military levels, rather than traditional force and might.⁷³ The outcome of such negotiations and harmonisation is often a compromise concerning aims and methods such as in Kosovo 1999, or in the formal command structure such as in Kuwait 1990-91.

More practical remedies aim to enhance the interoperability between forces. The experiences of Kuwait in 1990-91 and Kosovo 1999 illustrated that a proper understanding of each nation's strengths and limitations made it possible to mesh the requirements of each nation with the overall coalition operational design.⁷⁴ This included assigning suitable tasks to individual nations in accordance with their wishes rather than insisting on a one size fits all approach to operational design. Common force training and integration of doctrines may in theory be carried out prior to actual operations, such as NATO has attempted for 60 years in peacetime, or as the US carried out in theatre during the Korean War.⁷⁵ The inherent operational weaknesses of alliances and coalitions has been improved by the deployment of large national units, integrated ideally at operational level, but traditionally not lower than brigade level, in order to lessen the amount of friction that tactical integration carries with it and to reduce the number of areas vulnerable to multinational differences.⁷⁶

The character of the threat facing an alliance or coalition also seems to influence whether the dilemma between the need for alliances and coalitions and their inherent weaknesses emerges. Historically, alliances and coalitions met with success when faced with either a threat against the states' survival, or threats that do not require coalitions to operate over a length of time. Threats against the survival of the state, such as that facing the United Nations (UN) during World War II and its Western successor NATO, bind the states closer together and make issues of sovereignty less contentious. An exception from this was the challenges of the *Entente* during World War I where coalition unity was a contentious issue until the very end. If a threat is more limited, such as Kuwait in 1990-91, Kosovo in 1999, and Iraq 2003 the strains within the coalitions emerges quickly and the most important remedy is a swift conclusion of the

⁷³ Cohen, "Churchill and Coalition Strategy in World War II," p. 47.

⁷⁴ Riscassi, "Principles for Coalition Warfare," p. 59.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁷⁶ Steve Bowman, 'Historical and Cultural Influences on Coalition Operations', in Thomas J. Marshall, Phillip Kaiser, and Jon Kessmeier, "Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operations," in *Strategic Studies Institute Monographs* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1997), p. 18.

conflict. The most important way to ameliorate the dilemma between the need for alliances and coalitions and their ineffectiveness is a proper understanding of the exceptional nature of alliance and coalition strategy. Eliot Cohen argues persuasively that Winston Churchill's true greatness as a strategist lay in his ability to balance firmness with sympathy in his relationship with his alliance partners, and the needs of the whole alliance against the needs of the individual states, and thus understanding that alliance and coalition warfare is '...the art[...] of persuasion and negotiation....'.⁷⁷

Coalition and alliance warfare in contemporary conflicts

Striking a balance between the need for coalitions and managing their strategic weaknesses is in many respects more precarious in contemporary conflicts than previously. The need for alliances and coalitions is greater due to the character of the international system and the sizes of the military forces available. Simultaneously, the weaknesses of alliance and coalition strategy are more prevalent because many of the traditional remedies against coalition weaknesses are less available and employable.

With the brief exception of Iraq in April 2003, Western states have since 1999 been involved in limited, low intensity conflicts involving non-state actors, rendering many of the remedies against alliance and coalition ineffectiveness inapplicable. The character of the Afghanistan conflict since NATO's intervention in 2003 has been that of a stabilisation or counterinsurgency operation, presenting the alliance members with an indirect or limited threat, and denying the alliance the benefit of forging an alliance against an existential threat. The contemporary operations in Afghanistan have also required the alliance to operate in a hostile environment for a lengthy period of time. This renders the experiences from the brief alliance and coalition warfare of the 1990s less relevant, as long-term limited wars increase the potential for diverging interests and sovereignty issues to emerge.⁷⁸ The stabilisation or counterinsurgency character of the conflict also involves more non-state actors in the form of GOs and NGOs, making the alliance and coalition theory developed around Kuwait and Kosovo less relevant, whereas the actual intensity of the operations create challenges that render the

⁷⁷ Churchill in: Cohen, "Churchill and Coalition Strategy in World War II," p. 67.

⁷⁸ Steven Metz, "The Effect of Technological Asymmetry on Coalition Operations", in Marshall, Kaiser, and Kessmeier, "Problems and Solutions in Future Coalition Operations," p. 55.

experiences from the PSO carried out by the United Nations and NATO less applicable.

The methods used to reduce alliance and coalition inoperability are also less applicable than in previous alliances and coalitions. Although NATO as an alliance has for sixty years attempted to streamline its decision-making procedures and chains of command, its doctrines and training, these efforts concerned high intensity missions of defending Europe or stabilising the Balkans through PSO. Between 2003 and 2008 the alliance did not have a common approach to counterinsurgency, and hence no common doctrines or training directly relevant to the mission in Afghanistan.⁷⁹ The size of the contributions made available to ISAF between 2003 and 2008 as well as the dispersed design of the operations made the organisation along large national contingents more difficult. The actual troop contributions, except in the cases of the US and the UK after 2006, were at company group and battalion group levels.⁸⁰ The NATO units have consequently been forced to integrate their operations at the lowest tactical level without common training and doctrines.

Although the NATO alliance enjoyed certain benefits of an alliance such as an integrated command structure, alliance operations between 2003 and 2008 have had to be carried out without many of the instruments that successful alliances and coalitions have used to reduce the inherent ineffectiveness in alliance and coalition warfare, and these limitations of traditional strategic theory are likely to continue in future alliances and coalitions.

The influence of smaller states:

An analysis of NATO's strategy in Afghanistan would be deficient without focusing on the inherent dilemma in coalition and alliance strategy. This in turn may be analysed through the study of the NATO-alliance itself or the strategy of the lead nation of the alliance, the US. Whilst the lead nation and institution perspectives merit consideration in the understanding of contemporary strategy, another significant

⁷⁹ COMISAF, "Commander's Initial Assessment," p. 2-11. NATO's COIN doctrine was only ratified after 2009.

⁸⁰ ISAF, "ISAF Troops in Numbers," 2007 and 08.

feature concerning NATO's strategy between 2003 and 2008 was the influence of the lesser alliance partners in the actual conduct of strategy.

As significant as the institutions and the coalitions themselves are to understanding contemporary strategy in an international context, the most critical aspects of the use of force still pertain to the individual states constituting the alliance.⁸¹ Decisions about establishing, training, equipping and deploying military forces and other sources of power are still the prerogatives of individual states. Historically, lesser nations have had limited influence on alliance and coalition strategy because they did not always constitute a significant or relevant contribution. The lead nation would be able to dominate both the decision-making as well as the conduct of strategy. In contemporary alliance and coalition warfare, this is not always the case as the lesser nations in sum constitute larger and more important contributions. Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008 is a case in point. By mid- 2008 the ISAF operation in Afghanistan had contributions from forty-two states. The largest contingent was from the US, but ISAF's concept of operations relied on the use of smaller and medium states to take a significant share of the operational burden in Afghanistan. Out of ISAF's twenty six Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), the US was only fully responsible for twelve, and jointly responsible for two. The remaining twelve PRTs were operated by smaller and medium sized NATO countries.⁸² Furthermore, out of the 61 000 troops under ISAF command in July 2008, the US provided less than half, 26 000 troops, the remainder was provided by NATO allies. NATO in Afghanistan relied on the smaller and medium sized members of the coalition to play a significant and important part of both NATO's operations and policies in Afghanistan, providing the lesser members of the alliance with a greater degree of influence on alliance strategy than previous historical coalitions.

The lesser states of the alliance influenced the strategy at the political level and through the formal decision-making process of the NATO-summits, the force generating process and through their permanent representation in NATO's political and military councils. Furthermore, they had influence through their seconding of officials and officers to the Alliance's chain of command. Utilising these channels the lesser states would wield general influence depending on their size and position as one

⁸¹ Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency*, p. xi.

⁸² ISAF, "ISAF Troops in Numbers."

of 26 other NATO states. More importantly, the lesser states influenced NATO strategy beyond the actual formal structures, through the character of their actual contributions. The nature of NATO's operations between 2003 and 2008 was that of decentralised stabilisation and counterinsurgency efforts, making a division of the areas of responsibility (AOR) along national lines necessary. The size of the contributions deployed into these AORs depended largely on the individual state's resources and will. The individual states could also influence the *modus operandi* to a large degree. Equally important, alliance troops were not assigned to the NATO commanders without restrictions, as all nations retain control over their armed forces even while operating under alliance command. All nations, large and small, deployed a parallel national command structure to represent the state *vis-a-vis* NATO and to support the national troops by reporting directly to national headquarters. If orders from NATO chain of command appeared questionable to a specific contingent, the national chain of command could intervene.

The troops assigned to NATO could also be detached with national caveats or restrictions as to their actual use.⁸³ Although the use of national caveats was reduced after the Riga Summit of 2006, the individual states still retained control through other means, most through command and transfer of authority arrangements.⁸⁴ As noted, troops are never detached to an alliance or coalition unconditionally; instead ISAF-troops were detached through limited command arrangements where the alliance commanders had different degrees of control over the respective national contingents. The lesser states could vary whether they transferred their troops with operational command or control and to what NATO-level they provide command authority, for instance by providing operational command or control to the Regional Commands (RCs) rather than ISAF HQ, hence limiting the use of their troops outside the specific RCs.⁸⁵ The lesser states could also influence the actual operations by what kind of troops they chose to send, the level of civilian resources made available, and the doctrine by which they operated.⁸⁶ NATO did not have a common counterinsurgency doctrine between 2003 and 2008, and directions from NATO chain of command

⁸³ Donna Miles, "Gates: Nato Must Increase Assets, Cut Caveats in Afghanistan," *American Forces Press Service*, 25 October 2007.

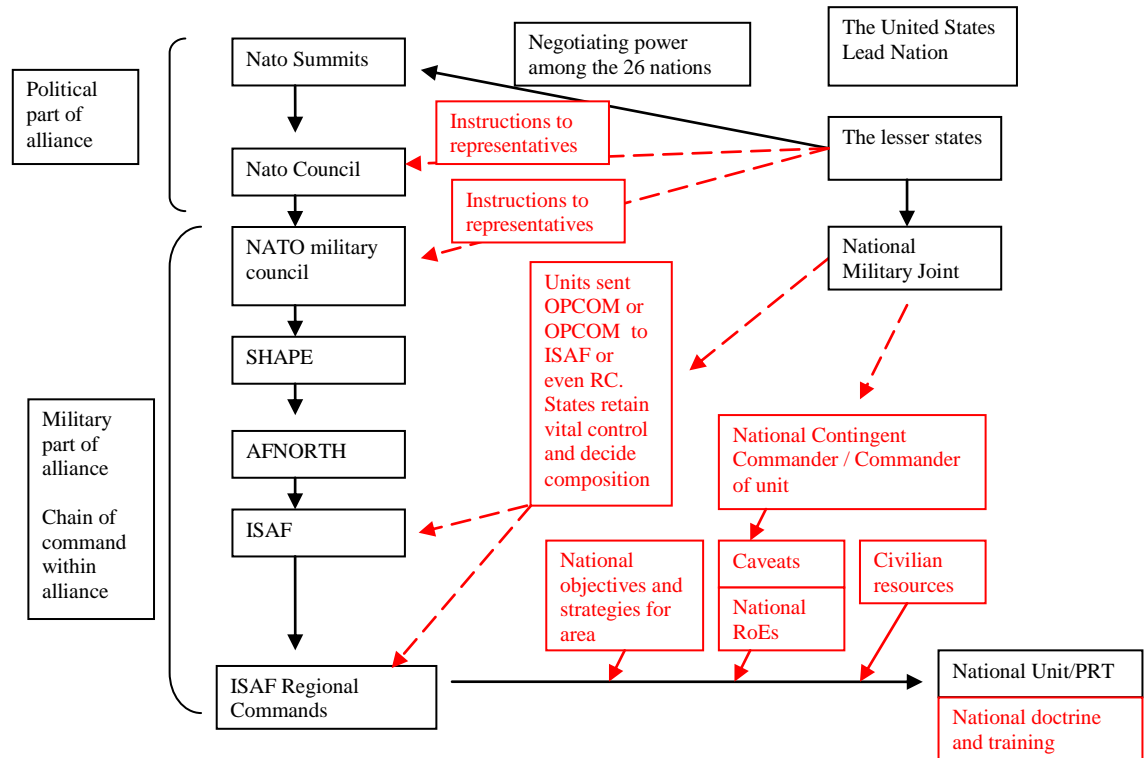
⁸⁴ NATO, "Riga Summit Declaration," (Brussels: NATO, 2006), Para. 24.

⁸⁵ Thomas Durell-Young, 'Command in Coalition Operations', in Marshall, Kaiser, and Kessmeier, p. 26ff.

⁸⁶ Adam Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan," *Survival* 51, no. 1 (2009): p. 49.

would have limited influence on the manner in which operations were to be carried out. Many nations had by 2008 developed their own strategies within their AORs, in line with NATO's overall directives but still with a distinctive national flavour.

The influence of the lesser states can be illustrated by the following diagram:



Note:
Black colour denotes formal influence on procedure and organisation. Red denotes national informal influence.

The lesser states exercised considerable autonomy in political, strategic and operational matters in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008, and thereby influenced alliance strategy.⁸⁷ NATO's strategy was in practice as much an aggregate of the strategies pursued by its individual members as an alliance strategy. An analysis of NATO's failure in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008 would be lacking without the study of the strategic behaviour of the individual states participating in the operation. Understanding what characterised the strategy of the individual states would aid in the examination of NATO's challenges in Afghanistan up to 2008, as well improve our understanding of how coalitions operate and affect contemporary strategy.

⁸⁷ Rory Stewart, in *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 38.

Strategy in Complex Conflicts

The second challenge facing the individual NATO-countries was that they were developing their strategies in Afghanistan while confronting a conflict and a strategic context which was new and unfamiliar to them. The individual NATO countries were developing their strategies in an international context where the threats to their national security were either indirect or viewed as tied in with the broader goals of a regional or international community. The aim of the operations for most NATO-countries was international crisis management rather than an outright military victory.⁸⁸

The conflict in Afghanistan represented a type of conflict that gradually emerged through the 1990s and the early 2000s. There is no academic agreement as to the character of the type conflicts that Afghanistan represents, but most authors emphasise its complexity and composite character, as well as its dissimilarity from the earlier interstate conflicts and conventional warfare that most NATO countries were prepared to fight.⁸⁹ Other authors emphasise the ideological struggle as well as the irregular tactics employed, and understood the conflict in Afghanistan as well as other similar conflicts in terms of a violent insurgency with the population as its main objective.⁹⁰ Furthermore, many authors have emphasised the almost dichotomous character of Afghanistan and other complex conflicts and note that the conflicts combine modern and primitive features simultaneously.⁹¹ This is seen as a result of two trends; the adversary adapting to the conventional superiority of the Western forces as well as the accessibility of modern technology and ideas through globalisation. The conflicts are described as composite threats, where regular and irregular modes of war blend together and are used deliberately by opponents to offset any conventional advantages.⁹² The conflicts defied traditional strategic thinking in terms of the conventional inter-state war that most Western states were prepared for and designed

⁸⁸ Smith, *The Utility of Force*. p. 270

⁸⁹ COMISAF, "Commander's Initial Assessment," p. 2-11.

⁹⁰ Smith, *The Utility of Force*, p. 278; DJ Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 28, no. 4 (2005): p. 598; Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency*, p. 13.

⁹¹ Michael Evans, "From Kadesh to Kandahar: Military Theory and the Future of War," *Naval War College Review* LVII, no. No. 3 (2003): p. 132.

⁹² Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007), p. 14; JN Mattis and F Hoffman, "Future Warfare: The Rise of Hybrid Wars," *Proceedings - United States Naval Institute* 131, no. 11- November (2005): pp. 18-19.

its forces for, as well as their previous peace support experience.⁹³ Their strategies also had to take into account the context of international crisis management in which international and local non-state actors operate independently or in conjunction with international organisations. The NATO-states were thus forced to develop strategies to cope with conflicts that were simultaneously pre-modern and hyper modern, simultaneously primitive and high tech, and had both intra-state and transnational roots and implications.

Not only were the states involved in making strategy in a conceptual void, but academics and professionals were also unable to agree on the sources and the nature of the actual conflict in Afghanistan. The literature on the Afghan conflict was and is diverging, and there is little agreement as to who the actors in the conflict really are, their reasons and motives to fight, and naturally disagreement on how to successfully develop a counter-strategy in Afghanistan. At the overall level, the conflict has been described as a part of a global Islamic insurgency and as part of a regional power struggle over Central and South Asia.⁹⁴ Inside Afghanistan authors have found the sources of the instability or insurgency in the Afghan government's inability to establish effective governance at central and local levels and ensuing popular grievances.⁹⁵ The lack of government control is a basic truth in any insurgency, but the main differences in the academic literature lie in the conclusions drawn from this basic proposition. One argument was that the conflict has its roots in the Afghan government's inability to provide basic security, law and order, and credible local governance. Another common argument derived from the grievance argument was the widespread belief that there was a link between the lack of development and the ensuing instability and insurgency.⁹⁶ This link has been countered by authors such as Antonio Giustozzi who argued that although the Afghan government's corruption and nepotism was a contributing cause to the conflict there was no direct link between the unrest and the

⁹³ D Betz, "Redesigning Land Forces for Wars Amongst the People," *Contemporary Security Policy* 28, no. 2 (2007): p.223; General Sir David Richards, "European Armies: The Challenge," *Adelphi Papers* 48, no. 400 (2008): p.56.

⁹⁴ Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," p.602.

⁹⁵ Gilles Dorronsoro, *The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment, 2009); Seth Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency," *International Security* 32, no. 4 (2008): p.8; Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, p.175ff.

⁹⁶ Astrid Suhrke, "A Contradictory Mission? Nato from Stabilization to Combat in Afghanistan," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 2 (2008): p. 219.

lack of development.⁹⁷ Giustozzi argues that the insurgents and their supporters never wanted foreign aid or development, but that the sources of the unrest was to be found in the inability of the traditional tribal societies to absorb the turbulent changes that Afghanistan and the region have experienced the last thirty years.⁹⁸ Giustozzi also lent credibility to another perspective on the roots of the instability and unrest which sees the uprising as rooted in the conflict line between central and local power in Afghanistan.⁹⁹ This argument was offered in parallel to the argument that the conflict could be explained by the xenophobic and traditional attitudes of Eastern and Southern Afghanistan, and in the ethnic divisions in Afghanistan and the exclusion on the Southern Pashtu population from the central government.¹⁰⁰ Finally, an important explanation for the uprising was to be found in the ideological and religious motivations of the Taliban and their representation of Islam and Afghan history.¹⁰¹

Given the multitude of conflict lines it is not surprising that academics or professionals have not been able to agree on the character of the main adversary, the Taliban. Gilles Dorronsoro argues that the Taliban is a cohesive and centrally directed organisation that skilfully exploits the multitude of conflict lines explored in the previous paragraph.¹⁰² This is contrary to the official British belief held by Secretary of State Des Browne and General Houghton who argued that the Taliban was divided between local and central tiers, a division that could be exploited.¹⁰³ This view is supported by Giustozzi who argues that the Taliban consists of at least three tiers, each with their own motivation and agenda.¹⁰⁴

Consequently, the individual states involved in the Afghanistan conflict between 2003 and 2008 had to develop their strategies in a conceptual void, within a conflict where the causes and the actors were unclear. These challenges occurred at a time when the lesser NATO countries had few political, strategic or operational concepts with which to deal with complex conflicts. The result was a conceptual confusion as to how

⁹⁷ Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, pp. viii and 198ff.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 39 and 230-31.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

¹⁰⁰ Dorronsoro, *The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan*, p. 14 and 16.

¹⁰¹ Thomas H. Johnson, "The Taliban Insurgency and an Analysis of Shabnamah (Night Letters)," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 18, no. 3 (2007): p. 339.

¹⁰² Dorronsoro, *The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan*, p. 12.

¹⁰³ *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev. pp. 5 and 8.

¹⁰⁴ Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, p. 43.

to respond to the challenges and consequently how to use force.¹⁰⁵ Apart from the theoretical approach to industrial war during the Cold War era, the NATO members shared few common concepts or doctrines on how to deal with complex conflicts, and they naturally developed their strategies based on their own experiences. The response to the Afghanistan conflict, has been seen as the meeting of three different schools of strategic and operational thought, represented by three different types forces: ‘...the traditional peacekeepers, the continental war fighters and, at a national level, the counter-insurgency forces.’¹⁰⁶ Given their impact, the question becomes how the lesser states approached the question of strategy in Afghanistan.

Consequences

NATO’s strategic challenges in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008 should not only be studied in relation to the specific challenges of the Taliban uprising or limited to the strategy of the coalition itself, but also through an examination of the individual states constituting the coalition and their efforts to develop strategy in an unfamiliar conflict.

In Afghanistan as in most other Western operations since 1989, large parts of the responsibility of developing strategy in practice rested with the lesser alliance and coalition states. These nations have thus far faced the challenge of making strategy in a situation where on the one hand they have limited influence on the most important decisions being made by the alliance and the U.S., but on the other hand they had a large degree of control over the actual use of force in Afghanistan. Furthermore, the nations have been developing their strategies in a conflict and in a context that is unfamiliar to them. The examination of how individual NATO countries have developed their strategies in the light of the challenges of coalition warfare and complex conflicts merits closer investigation.

Examining the strategies of the three states would improve our knowledge of the role of the smaller and medium sized states in coalition operations, operations that are likely to remain the mainstay of international crisis management for the foreseeable future. A study of the strategies of the three lesser NATO- partners in the ISAF-

¹⁰⁵ Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, p. 12.

¹⁰⁶ Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency*, pp. 5-6.

operation would advance our understanding of how these states perceive and use force, and may enhance our understanding as to how to best use these nations within a coalition. An improved appreciation and use of lesser coalition partners within a coalition may create more cohesive alliances and ideally improve strategic and operational effectiveness.¹⁰⁷ This is important because although each contribution by the three states was limited, their total contribution have consistently outweighed the contribution in numbers of the lead nation in Afghanistan, namely the US. The lesser states have spared the US troops and resources, as well as added new perspectives and competencies. A proper analysis of how the lesser nations use force to realise political aims may save lead nations troops and resources in Afghanistan as well as in future coalition operations.

Lastly, an analysis and comparison of the strategies of the lesser nations of a coalition may improve the strategic thought in the states themselves and aid these states to see their own strategies in the context of other states confronting similar challenges in contemporary conflicts. In many European states the word strategy is not uttered in relation to international crisis management as it is seen as infringing on the domain of the coalition itself. Strategy is most often reserved for the case of national survival, and not for the contributions in international crisis management. The study of some of the lesser nations involved in the NATO operations up to 2008 will shed light on the *de-facto* strategic thinking in these countries and their use force, and will contribute to the strategic debate in these countries as well as in the broader field of strategic studies.

The Factors of the Study:

From the definitions of strategy and strategic behaviour, and the exploration of coalition warfare and complex conflicts, four factors were deduced as relevant for the study of the characteristics of strategic behaviour in the three cases. The factors are the three states' political purposes and aims, how the purposes and aims were adapted to the nature of war, how the three states organised the process of strategy, and their

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

strategic outlook. These four factors were then operationalised by more detailed questions based on the analysis of the strategic literature:

Factors	Questions:
The political purpose and aims	- What were the political purposes and political aims behind the three states' use of force in Afghanistan?
Adaptability	Were the political purpose and aims adapted to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The nature of war and conflict? - The character of the complex conflict in Afghanistan? - The dynamics of coalition and alliance warfare?
The organisation of the strategic process	- How was the process of strategy organised in the three states? - What was the level and form of integration in the strategic process?
The use of force and the strategic outlook	- How did the three states understand strategy and force? - With what doctrines did the three states employ force?

Analysing what characterises the three countries' strategic behaviour requires an analytical framework, and a disaggregation of strategy itself. This is a challenging task as the making of strategy is a complex social and human process with many institutions and individuals coming together and operating in a dynamic and changing context with limited and unreliable information.¹⁰⁸ Establishing causal relationships in strategy amongst the many factors actually influencing strategic decisions is difficult. Strategy can be analysed in factors, but the factors are difficult to isolate from each other thematically as they influence each other constantly, and there is a dynamic human factor permeating all factors. Strategy and strategic behaviour must be studied as a whole even though it necessarily must be analysed through factors. Consequently, my four factors cannot be understood in isolation but rather as interacting with each other, creating a whole.

Although strategy should be analysed as a whole, my focus on the three countries and their involvement in coalition operations in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008 limited the scope of what factors were relevant to my analysis. Although unlimited and industrial wars are rare occurrences in history, much of the extant analysis of strategic

¹⁰⁸ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 25.

literature was developed with the context of these wars in mind, rather than expeditionary and limited warfare. Certain factors often discussed in the strategic literature, such as the access to natural resources, technological innovations, or the three countries' strategic geography may be excluded from my analysis, whereas other factors such as the way force is perceived and used in the post-modern Western world are more important today than in industrial wars waged for survival of the state. In the following I will explain how I arrived at my factors through an analysis of the strategic literature. This will be completed by initially explaining the choice of each factor of analysis before proceeding to the questions emanating from each factor in relation to the three cases.

Factor 1: The political purpose and aims

Strategic literature

The definition of strategy employed by this study is that strategy is understood as the process of utilising force or the threat of force for the purpose of political ends. From this follows that strategy is an instrument of political purpose. One of the fundamental aspects of strategic theory emphasises the instrumentality of strategy; and that strategy serves as a means to an end. Strategy is a means to direct and control a state's use of force in war and conflict, and the ends to be attained by this direction is found in a state's political purpose and political aims.¹⁰⁹ From this initial definition also follows that although usually strategy is connected with the actual use of force, the process of strategy also includes the consideration of the use of force to realise political objectives although force is never actually used. This follows from the definition's inclusion of the threat of force, but it also follows from the adoption of a Clausewitzian perspective of force where the possible or contemplated use of force is also to be included in an analysis of strategy as far as it influences one of the sides.¹¹⁰ This means that my definition includes the actual use of force, the threat of use of force but also cases where force was contemplated but not actually used.

The most influential proponent of this manner of understanding strategy was Carl von Clausewitz, who defined strategy as '...the utilisation of engagements for the

¹⁰⁹ Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," p. 49.

¹¹⁰ Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, p. 249.

purpose of the war.’¹¹¹ To Clausewitz war and strategy could not have a purpose in itself, but found its purpose in the rational political objectives of a conflict. Strategy was a part of a hierarchical system of purpose, ends and means, and strategy found its means in successful military engagements and its purpose and ends in the political aims of the war.¹¹² Although Clausewitz was not the first to establish the relationship between strategy and politics, he was the most influential.¹¹³ Most influential strategic thinkers of the last two centuries have adopted or discussed Clausewitz’s instrumental view of strategy as their departure point for their discussion of war and strategy, including Julian Corbett, Basil Liddell Hart, Bernard Brodie, Michael Howard, Colin Gray, and Hew Strachan.

The consequence of adopting Clausewitz’s instrumental view of war and strategy is that there can be no separate logic or measure when it comes to examining strategy. Strategy is neither the ends nor the means of a conflict, but rather as the strategist CS Gray argues, the ‘....the bridge that relates military power to political purpose....’¹¹⁴ Strategic logic is a combination of the logic from its political purpose and the logic that follows from the use of forceful means. Strategy is ultimately measured in political terms, and the question of success is relative to the political ambitions that spawned the strategy. Discussing strategy in isolation from politics would not make sense, because ‘....the main lines of every major strategic plan are *largely political in nature*, and their political character increases the more the plan encompasses the entire war and the entire state.’¹¹⁵ Following the instrumental view logically entails that it is impossible to discuss strategy without first understanding what political purpose and what political ends the concrete strategy is meant to realise. Strategy is thus the utilisation of force in order to realise a political purpose, and any analysis of what characterises strategy, including in Afghanistan, the focus of this study, would be incomplete without the inclusion of the political purpose as a factor. The first factor in order to analyse the strategic behaviour of the three states is to examine with what political purpose and with what political aims the three countries engaged in the coalition operation in

¹¹¹ Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, pp. 169 and 243.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 120 and 28.

¹¹³ Beatrice Heuser, *Reading Clausewitz*(London: Pimlico Random House, 2002), pp. 44-45.

¹¹⁴ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 17.

¹¹⁵ Carl von Clausewitz in a letter to Major von Roeder in 1827. Quoted as found in P Paret, *Understanding War: Essays on Clausewitz and the History of Military Power*(Princeton University Press, 1992), p. 126. (Italics in original).

Afghanistan.

Operationalising the factor

The factor of political purpose is an obvious starting point for any analysis of strategy, whether the purpose is to analyse the nature of strategy, as is the ambition of C.S. Gray, the making of strategy, as explored by Murray and Grimsley, or to temper the enthusiasm for the technological aspect of military force as Michael Howard.¹¹⁶ Any analysis of actual strategy must commence by grappling with what decision makers intended with their use of force, and hence this will be the first question of the factor.

The factor of political purpose will focus on the stated purpose and political objectives of the three NATO-states. This will be done by including all publically available papers which had as its intent to communicate political purpose in relation to strategic behaviour. General communication to the public has normally not been included, unless it explicitly deals with strategic rationale. The purpose should provide the scope of the strategy and how it was characterised. The Netherlands, the UK, and Norway all published specific policy and strategy documents on their commitments to Afghanistan late in the period, the Netherlands in 2006, and the other two in early 2009.¹¹⁷ However, not all aspects of the three countries' strategies were explicitly stated, either because they were understandably unwilling to make all aspects of their strategies public, because the commitment initially did not seem to warrant the publication of specific strategies, and because all aspects of the states' commitments were not seen as a whole. Particularly smaller countries like Norway do not use the term strategy in relation to their commitments to international crisis management. The countries perceive their commitments in relation to their general foreign policy, overall national security strategies and coalition policies. This does not necessarily indicate a lack of a strategy, merely a lack of an articulated strategy and a different understanding of strategy.¹¹⁸ Just as any thesis has a theoretical basis whether the author is explicit on his

¹¹⁶ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, pp.29-30; Howard, *The Causes of Wars and Other Essays*, p. 101; Murray and Grimsley in Williamson Murray, MacGregor Knox, and Alvin Bernstein, *The Making of Strategy - Rulers, States, and War*(Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 1.

¹¹⁷ HMGovernment, "UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Way Forward," *AfPak Policy*; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," *The Netherlands in Afghanistan*; Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009", *Norwegian strategy in Faryab*.

¹¹⁸ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, pp. 46-47.

theory or not, the actual commitment of forceful means as in the cases of the UK, the Netherlands, and Norway, follows a certain rationale. The strategies of all countries may not be ideally designed, but the commitment of force was decided upon with some outcome in mind. Particularly in the case of Norway, which did not have a specific and published strategy for its military commitment in Afghanistan until late 2008, the study of strategic behaviour became a question of interpreting the political purpose behind the use of force from general security and policy documents.

Factor 2: Adaptability

The instrumental view of strategy analysed through the factor of political purpose fits well with the prevalent view of politics and strategy in the Western world. The view emphasises rationality in war and strategy, and offers a degree of control over the use of force. It also fits the current prevailing view among strategic authors of the dominance of civilian politics over the military profession, and the possibility for a close co-ordination of all political resources available to the state.¹¹⁹

Strategy is the realisation of political intent by the use of force. Strategy that strives towards any sort of rationality cannot find its purpose or direction in itself; it is merely an instrument of the political intent. In a strategic context the most important aspect of the political intent is to what extent it provides clear direction and guidance as to what the use of force is to achieve.¹²⁰ Strategy is about transforming abstract political intent into practical forceful action and is an inherently practical process.¹²¹ This means that the political guidance must be clear, and that there is a discernable logic in what the use of force was to achieve. Furthermore, where there are multiple political aims, the relationship between the aims and their internal priorities must be clear for strategy to become the instrument of policy that it is intended to be, and for strategy to be able to realise the political ambitions.

Adopting the instrumental view of Clausewitz and his followers, however, entails certain modifications and limitations.¹²² The chosen definition implies that strategy is an

¹¹⁹ See: Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime* (New York; London: Free Press, 2002); Robert Egnell, "Civil-Military Aspects of Effectiveness in Peace Support Operations," (Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency, 2008).

¹²⁰ Howard, *The Causes of Wars and Other Essays*, p. 101.

¹²¹ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 4.

¹²² AJ Echevarria, "On the Clausewitz of the Cold War: Reconsidering the Primacy of Policy in on War," *Armed Forces & Society* 34, no. 1 (2007): pp. 95-96.

instrument to politics and the political objectives, but this one-sided relationship may be altered by the realities of armed conflict.¹²³ The initial rational and instrumental relationship between purpose, ends, and means in war and strategy, can be transformed when it encounters the complex and unpredictable nature of war. Two of Clausewitz's persistent features of war involve human unpredictability; that our strategy is always directed against a live and reacting adversary whose objectives and actions will necessarily run counter to ours, and that our strategy must be realised by human beings.¹²⁴ The uncertainty and unpredictability that follows from these two elements of human interaction make the realisation of strategy impossible to predict. The political purpose and aims must be realised in the harsh and practical environment of human conflict, where the use of force often creates its own dynamic due to human emotions and chance, and may not be controlled by rationality. This means that the relationship between the political purpose and aims on the one side, and strategy on the other, is not a relationship that works only one way. Although strategy and the use of force are the instruments of the political purpose, the use of force and the events on the ground may instead influence and change the political objectives. In practice, the relationship between ends and means in strategy, between the political purpose and the use of force in conflict, can best be characterised as reciprocal, and the reciprocity and the potential limits to instrumentality must in turn influence strategic decision makers and civil-military relations. The initial instrumental and top-down approach must be adjusted and replaced by a holistic view, where strategy is ideally directed by its political purpose, but opens up for the reality that chance, friction and enemy action will influence and change the strategy and the political purpose in practice.¹²⁵ This means that in order to realise its political ambitions in the face of an actual conflict, a government could be forced to alter its political aims to better adapt to the actual situation. This could involve changing what it intends to achieve, the ways in which it wants to achieve it, or indeed, in a coalition setting, alter its involvement in the conflict itself.

The view that the instrumental element of strategy must be modified in practice by the realities on the ground was of course pertinent in the conflict and the period of this study. As pointed out above, this study understood the conflict of Afghanistan as

¹²³ Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, pp. 107 and 888.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.186.

¹²⁵ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, pp. 21-23; Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, p. 108; Echevarria, "On the Clausewitz of the Cold War: Reconsidering the Primacy of Policy in on War," p. 99.

exhibiting many of the characteristics of complex and hybrid wars where the varying degrees of intensity, the number of possible partners and actors in the field made unpredictability, chance and change the norm rather than the exception. Furthermore, the strategy of the three cases took part within a coalition consisting of a lead country, a host nation and forty odd other countries, each with their interests and purposes to be adapted to the overall aims of the coalition. This emphasises that an analysis of individual strategies within a coalition such as NATO's ISAF force cannot be limited to a straightforward instrumental approach, but must also include the question of how the three states related to the challenges of developing strategy within a dynamic coalition and in support of a host nation.

The factor of adaptability will thus analyse whether the political purposes and aims in the three cases were clear and logical so as to provide direction for strategy to be an instrument for the political intent. The next question will be whether the political purposes, aims and objectives were adapted to the nature of war in general, and whether they represented a reciprocal view of strategy. In addition the question will analyse whether the government's political intent took into account the complex character of the Afghanistan conflict and the complexities of making and conducting strategy in a coalition, and adapted or changed its political intent or the nature of its participation in the conflict.¹²⁶

Factor 3: The organisation of the strategic process

Strategic literature

Strategy is the process of utilising force for political ends. The initial feature of strategy deduced from the definition was the instrumental relationship between politics and strategy, whereas the second feature related political intent to the realities of conflict. The third feature to emerge from the definition relates to another practical aspect of strategy; that strategy is the practical process of transforming abstract political purpose into a concrete plan that directs and controls the use of force.¹²⁷ The third factor in the analysis of the strategic behaviour of the three states will thus focus on how this process of making strategy was organised in the three states.

¹²⁶ "Echevarria, p. 100.

¹²⁷ Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," p. 49.

Transforming an abstract political purpose into a practical and feasible plan of action illustrates the challenges of strategic decision-making.¹²⁸ In the process of making strategy political intentions are to be wedded to practical considerations involving the means of force, and then realised in a highly volatile and changing environment against a resistant opponent who will do his utmost to thwart the plan. The challenges and pitfalls of the process of transforming the political purpose and aims into practical action are the reasons many strategic theorists have focused on this aspect of strategy making when analysing actual strategies. The transformation of the political purpose and aim into a plan for the use of force involves the meeting of at least two different categories of state officials and the establishing of a dialogue and working civil-military relations between them.¹²⁹ The political purpose and aims are in principal developed at the political level, whereas the use of force is entrusted to the military profession. The meeting of these two categories of state officials entails both personal and institutional challenges with direct implications on the outcome of the actual strategy chosen.

By accepting that the transformation of the political purpose in strategy has both theoretical and practical aspects and that it involves at least two professional groups in the state, it also becomes clear why strategy is often regarded as a process rather than a single act.¹³⁰ Developing strategy is an iterative process where the political purpose must be negotiated in a changing political world, it then has to be transformed into a practical strategic plan which in turn must be adjusted to the unpredictable realities of the conflict itself. Strategy is developed in an uncertain and complex environment where human errors and reacting adversaries influence outcomes, and sometimes pure chance may change the circumstances and render the best political objectives irrelevant. The political objectives must be adjusted to the new situation and so must the strategy. Faced with the uncertainties of friction and living adversaries, in reality the development and conduct of strategy becomes an iterative process where political

¹²⁸ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 63.

¹²⁹ Eliot A. Cohen 'The Unequal Dialogue' in P Feaver and RH Kohn, *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security*(Cambridge, Ma: MIT Press, 2001), pp. 432-33.

¹³⁰ Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, 'Introduction: On Strategy', in Murray, Knox, and Bernstein, *The Making of Strategy - Rulers, States, and War*, p. 1; Hew Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil-Military Relations after Iraq," *Survival* 48, no. 3 (2006): p. 68.

purpose and aims are transformed and adjusted continuously between the politicians in charge and those who are to carry out the plan.¹³¹

How the process of strategy is organised, or more precisely, which government institutions are used, what personnel are involved in the process, and what relationship exists between them, has received significant attention in the strategic literature.

In their analysis of the strategy making, Murray and Grimsley argue that '[t]he structure of government and military institutions plays a crucial role in the formulation of strategy and its adaptability to the actual conditions.'¹³² They argue for a direct correlation between the organisation of the strategic process and the effectiveness of the actual strategy. These two authors do not distinguish between the role of institutions on the one side and the relationship between groups and individuals on the other; instead they integrate the individual side and the institutional side of the process into one factor of organisation of government and military institutions. The need to examine the organisational aspects is further reinforced by MacGregor Knox in his analysis of the driving forces in the transformation of strategy making. Similarly to Murray and Grimsley, Knox chooses to use the institutions and the individuals manning them as one of his main driving forces in strategic change.¹³³

In his recent criticism of the lack of British and Western strategy in Iraq and Afghanistan, Hew Strachan argued that a dysfunctional organisation and the wrong institutions in charge of the strategic process were important reasons for the lack of strategic effectiveness in the UK.¹³⁴ To Strachan, the development of proper strategic institutions was crucial if any improvement was to be made. He argued that proper strategic institutions are a '....default mechanism....' which the making of strategy may fall back on if there is a lack of genius or unproductive personal relationships to prevent the constructive interaction between the politicians and the military.¹³⁵ The structure of the institutions and their organisation was critical to Strachan. Strachan did not deny the impact of personalities and personal relationships, but argued that basing the process of strategy on the premise that certain personalities always will emerge or

¹³¹ Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," p. 52; "Making Strategy: Civil–Military Relations after Iraq," p. 67; Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, p. 1.

¹³² Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley, p. 19

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 615.

¹³⁴ Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," p. 50

¹³⁵ Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil–Military Relations after Iraq," p. 76.

that good personal relationships always will develop is a dangerous course. Strachan draws on support from the civil servant Ewan Broadbent's analysis of the changes in the British Ministry of Defence, where he concludes that '[o]rganisation is often regarded as mundane, even tedious. Policies and personalities are what count. But in the field of defence this is not the case'.¹³⁶

In his analysis of the nature of strategy C.S. Gray also includes organisation as one of his seventeen dimensions. His treatment of the factors itself is limited to the actual government structures, whereas the impact of individuals and the relationship between them is treated under different topics. Furthermore, elements of what Murray, Strachan and Broadbent discuss are also included in another of Gray's dimensions such as military administration as well as strategic theory and doctrine.¹³⁷ More importantly, although Gray's organisational dimension only constitutes one of seventeen dimensions, the challenges of the process of making strategy features prominently in his work. This is evident in his discussion of his dimensions, where the process of transforming political purpose, the establishment of proper institutions, and the challenges of the dialogue between the two professions involved in the making of strategy, are important and essential parts of all Gray's works.¹³⁸

Organising the process of strategy is a question that involves civil-military relations. The questions of how to understand and transform the political purpose into forceful action and the relationship between the two groups of professionals involved in the strategic process are questions that strategic studies share with those studying civil-military relations, or the actual relationship '....between soldiers and *statesmen*....'.¹³⁹ According to E.A. Cohen, the question of how the strategic process is organised and how politicians and military interact '....lies at the heart of what strategy is all about.'¹⁴⁰ It is clear that an analysis and comparison of what characterises actual strategies in NATO-countries would be lacking without studying the organisation of the process of strategy in three different countries.

¹³⁶ Ewan Broadbent, *The Military and Government: From Macmillan to Heseltine*, RUSI Defence Studies (London: Macmillan, 1988), p. 3.

¹³⁷ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, pp. 33-36.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 48, chapter 2.

¹³⁹ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, p. xi. (Emphasis in original)

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. xii.

The emphasis on the organisation of the strategic process is not unanimous in strategic literature. Carl von Clausewitz's main work *Vom Kriege* engages only briefly with the question of structure and then only as a consequence of the political nature of war.¹⁴¹ Indeed, when Clausewitz tried to analyse the causes and conditions of the use of engagements in strategy he did not identify the structure of strategy making as an important element, but rather '...the moral, physical, mathematical, geographical, and statistical elements.'¹⁴² Michael Howard in his works on the conduct of strategy did not identify an organisational dimension in addition to his four dimensions of strategy, the operational, the logistical, the social, and the technological.¹⁴³

This lack of attention may indicate that the organisation of the strategic process is a less relevant factor. On the other hand, Clausewitz never fully revised and completed his work to include a proper analysis of strategy on par with his analysis of war in general.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, Michael Howard's purpose with his strategic dimensions was to not analyse the characteristics of actual strategies but rather to provide a general historical view of strategic thought before criticising the American propensity to apply technological solutions to any strategic problem.¹⁴⁵ Both Howard and Clausewitz clearly emphasised the relationship between politicians and the military in their work.¹⁴⁶ This means that although they do not emphasise the structures as much as Strachan, Murray and Gray, they still acknowledged the importance of the process of transforming the political purpose into a practical plan.

The two views of what are important features in the process also bring to attention the relationship between the structures and the individuals involved in the process of strategy, and their impact on the end result. Although the government structures are important, the structures themselves do not produce strategy; the individual politicians, civil servants and military officers do.¹⁴⁷ However, as Strachan points out, not focusing on the structures and expecting genius and good relations

¹⁴¹ Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, pp. 893-94. Book VIII, Ch. 6B.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 252. Book III, ch. 2. My transl.

¹⁴³ Howard, *The Causes of Wars and Other Essays*, p. 105.

¹⁴⁴ AJ Echevarria, "Clausewitz: Toward a Theory of Applied Strategy," *Defense & Security Analysis* 11, no. 3 (1995): p. 230.

¹⁴⁵ Howard, *The Causes of Wars and Other Essays*, p. 111.

¹⁴⁶ Michael Eliot Howard, *Soldiers and Governments : Nine Studies in Civil-Military Relations* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957), p. 22; Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*. Book VIII, ch. 6B

¹⁴⁷ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p.33.

between politicians, civil servants and military officers is equivalent to performing without a safety net.¹⁴⁸ Organisation must be seen as including both the personnel and the structures involved in the process of making and conducting strategy.

Having the right organisation with the right structures and the right people does not produce good strategy in itself. The organisation of structures and personnel must be combined with relevant ideas, and as such the organisation of the process of strategy may be a necessary but not a sufficient condition in the analysis of a strategic outcome. Similarly, when analysing what characterises actual strategies, the organisation of the process is but one of the necessary factors. The impact of the organisation of the process of strategy is perhaps best described by former Prime Minister MacMillan, who argued that although organisations do not solve defence problems and priorities in themselves, ‘....bad organisation can do much harm and this is truer in defence than in many other spheres.’¹⁴⁹ If strategy as C.S. Gray argues is ‘....the bridge that relates military power to political purpose....’, then the organisation of the strategic process may be seen as the framework of that bridge.¹⁵⁰

Operationalising the factor

This factor will initially analyse how the process of transforming the political purpose and aims into a plan was structured and what institutions were used in each case. Furthermore, it will examine who was involved in this process and what the relationship was between them. In practice this means examining the institutions of the ministries of defence, inter-departmental committees and the top level of the military organisations, as well as the examining the relationship between the politicians, civil servants and military who were involved in the process of transforming political purpose into strategic and operational plans.

The next question is the manner in which to analyse the structures and the relationships involved in the strategy making process. The prevailing view is that if politics influences strategy this should be reflected in the structures and the

¹⁴⁸ Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil–Military Relations after Iraq," p.76.

¹⁴⁹ Harold MacMillan, 'Foreword' in Broadbent, *The Military and Government: From Macmillan to Heseltine*, p.ix.

¹⁵⁰ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 17.

relationships of strategy.¹⁵¹ Given the instrumental relationship between politics and strategy, and the reiterative nature of strategy, the current tendency is to advocate for integrated structures.¹⁵² This is the thought behind the integrated structures of the ministries of defence in the UK, the Netherlands and Norway, who have all embraced this idea.¹⁵³ Given the close relationship between politics, strategy and operations it makes sense to have the structures reflect this, most often in the shape of a unified or integrated ministry of defence, as well as joint operational structures. Increased structural integration between the political and military elements is accepted as an important way of improving the strategic process and is ‘...imperative for increased effectiveness’.¹⁵⁴ This is also the case for the military organisation where the establishing of joint military headquarters and units, as well as the ability to operate in joint forces is a major contributor to strategic effectiveness.¹⁵⁵ The idea of integration also enters into the relationships between the groups involved in the transformation of political purpose into practical plans. The political nature of strategy and seeing strategy as a process means that it is neither possible, nor desirable to separate the groups involved in the strategic process. This is because if the boundaries between politics and the military are permeable, there will be no clear distinction between pure political and military professional areas of responsibility, and little room for a separate military sphere.

The alternative to the integrated view of the strategic process is to be found in elements of the traditional literature on strategic studies and civil-military relations, but also in more recent criticism. The traditional view, or as E.A.Cohen argues the normal view, of civil-military relations and the making of strategy is that politics and the practical application of force should be distinguished as two separate spheres with some autonomy for the military sector. The classic example of this is Samuel P. Huntington’s thesis of objective military control.¹⁵⁶ Huntington argued for an equilibrium where the political control was maintained and accepted by the military in

¹⁵¹ See: Cohen, *Supreme Command*, p. 8.

¹⁵² Egnell, "Civil-Military Aspects of Effectiveness in Peace Support Operations," Ch. 4.

¹⁵³ See: MoD, "Norwegian White Paper 'the Reorganisation of the Armed Forces in the Period 2002-2005'," ed. Ministry of Defence, (Oslo: Ministry of Defence, 2001), www.defensie.nl/organisatie/defensie/militaire_leiding, and www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/Organisation

¹⁵⁴ Egnell, p. 35.

¹⁵⁵ Gray, *Strategy and History : Essays on Theory and Practice*, p. 80.

¹⁵⁶ S. P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press, 2002; repr., 19th print), p. 94.

exchange for an autonomous military professional sphere. Although Huntington's main idea seems to have lost its impact, some of his underlying themes still provide useful points of discussion for the organisation of the strategic process.

The first underlying theme is one of political influence versus strategic effectiveness. Although the political purpose provides meaning to strategy, the strategic process must be a reciprocal one with emphasis on all levels of the making of strategy, not only the political level.¹⁵⁷ The criticism of the integration argument is that if the integration of the strategic process is carried out with political motives such as strengthening civilian control, cutting budgets, or improving bureaucratic efficiency, integration may not necessarily improve strategy or indeed be harmful to it.¹⁵⁸ As Strachan points out in his criticism of civil-military relations in the UK, the purpose of the Clausewitzian thought of seeing the political and the military process as one '...was the integration of civil and military authorities, not the subordination of the military to political control.'¹⁵⁹ As an example, the rationale behind Norway's introduction of its integrated ministry of defence appeared to be as much about cost effectiveness and civilian control as about strategic effectiveness.¹⁶⁰ The analysis of the level of integration will thus not be limited to the level of integration in the states' strategic process, but also to what extent the integration is done with strategic issues in mind.

A second theme concerns the relationship between the political decision makers and their military partners and advisors. Although all aspects of force may have a political dimension, there is still a need for a military profession to wield it.¹⁶¹ Being that politicians need military professionals as advisors it becomes a question of how relevant the advice is and how well prepared the military advisors are in providing it in the complex setting of Afghanistan and similarly complex conflicts. A further problem of providing military advice may be if the strategic process becomes too integrated, the military advice can be throttled by being too closely connected to the political side.¹⁶² This means that there may be such a thing as too much integration in the strategic

¹⁵⁷ Echevarria, "On the Clausewitz of the Cold War: Reconsidering the Primacy of Policy in on War," p. 95.

¹⁵⁸ Howard, *Soldiers and Governments : Nine Studies in Civil-Military Relations*, p. 12.

¹⁵⁹ Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil-Military Relations after Iraq," p. 75.

¹⁶⁰ Norwegian MoD, "Norwegian Government White Paper No 45: 00/01 (*Stortingsproposisjon Nr. 45, 2000-2001*) 'the Reorganisation of the Armed Forces in the Period 2002-2005'," p. 15.

¹⁶¹ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, pp. 239-47.

¹⁶² .

process seen from the perspective of strategic effectiveness. A good strategic process depends on the frank exchange of views between the civilian and military side, but authors argue that integrated structures stifle the debate on strategic issues by limiting the debate to the closed rooms of the MoDs, and the military organisation anticipating political viewpoints rather than developing independent professional views. In both the UK and in Norway this argument has been put forward.¹⁶³ Currently, the intensity of this debate seems to vary between the three countries with the British structure of powerful service chiefs, combined with a stronger military culture, providing a platform for more open debate and a stronger military viewpoint than in Norway and the Netherlands. Consequently, it becomes necessary to analyse how the political and military considerations are developed and how they are included in the actual process.

In the analysis of what characterises the strategic behaviour of these three countries there is a need for a factor analysing the organisation of the process of strategy. This factor of organisation will include both the aspects of what institutions were used and what personnel were involved as well as the relationship between the different groups of state officials. This factor will further analyse what organisational model was chosen, whether an integrated or a more separate model, the reasoning behind this choice and finally how professional advice was included in the process.

Factor 4: The use of force and the strategic outlook

Strategy is the utilisation of force in order to realise a political purpose. The fourth aspect deduced from the strategic theory is the question of how the UK, the Netherlands and Norway understood and employed force. The fourth factor will examine the strategic outlook with which the three countries developed their strategies.

Political purpose and aims are realised and carried out by numerous actions of international bodies and governments. States realise a vast number of policy objectives and aims every day, but if all these actions are to be considered strategy, the term becomes too wide to be analysed properly. Strategy cannot include all actions employed to realise any political purpose. Hence, this factor will merit exploration of the links

¹⁶³ Tormod Heier, "Too Much Self Censorship (*For mye selvsensur*)," *Norges Forsvar* 09, no. 7 (2009): p. 20; H Strachan, "The Civil-Military Gap in Britain," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 26, no. 2 (2003): p. 57.

between the use of force and strategy. This will be accomplished by first explaining the factor and its relationship to strategic culture, before I analyse the relationship between the use of force and strategy. Lastly, I will analyse the different theories of how to understand force and what experiences, assumptions, ideas, theories, and doctrines lay behind the employment of force in the UK, the Netherlands and Norway.

The factor of strategic outlook includes elements of the contentious topic of strategic culture, as it tries to study the manner in which the UK, the Netherlands, and Norway understood force, and the discourse, the ideas, and assumptions behind the employment of force. Given my outlook on strategy and strategic culture, strategic outlook will be understood as the ‘...shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior....’ among the strategic elites in the UK, the Netherlands, and Norway that shape the understanding of the use of force and how force should best be applied.¹⁶⁴

Strategic culture is a highly contested concept within political, strategic, and military studies, but in this study it will be limited to the exploration of how the three states understood their strategic problems, thought about strategy, and attempted to employ force in pursuit of their political aims.¹⁶⁵ The question posed in this study explores how the three country perceived military force, what force is, its utility, and its proper use.¹⁶⁶ The factor of strategic outlook will consequently address how the UK, the Netherlands, and Norway understood force and strategy, and how the three countries thought force should be employed in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008.

Strategic literature

What distinguishes war from other international activity and strategy from other government activities is the use of or the threat of force.¹⁶⁷ This emphasis on the use of forceful means to realise strategy is partly the result of the theories of Carl von Clausewitz. Clausewitz argued that ‘[w]ar in its real meaning is fighting,...’ and the ‘outmost use of violent force’.¹⁶⁸ Given his view of strategy as the realisation of

¹⁶⁴ Kartchner et.al., quoted as found in Jeffrey S. Lantis, "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism," (Washington: Defense Threat Reduction Agency, 2006), p. 16.

¹⁶⁵ CS Gray, "Out of the Wilderness: Prime Time for Strategic Culture," *Comparative Strategy* 26, no. 1 (2007): p. 5.

¹⁶⁶ Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," p. 46.

¹⁶⁷ Howard, *The Causes of Wars and Other Essays*, p. 36.

¹⁶⁸ Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, pp. 167, 90, and 320.

political ends through the use of engagements, there is no doubt that Clausewitz's view of strategy emphasised the use of force, and in particular military force. To Clausewitz the only means available in war was fighting.¹⁶⁹ The element that set war and strategy apart from other human interaction and government activity was the impact of violent force. Indeed, the use of force and violence was what rendered war and strategy suitable for study in its own right.¹⁷⁰ The use of force was consequently a central element to Clausewitz's ideas on strategy.

The view that the use of force is an essential element of strategy is also furthered by Michael Howard, who argues that the use of force is what sets the '.....strategic approach to international relations.....' aside from other approaches.¹⁷¹ The use of force or coercion is inextricably linked to strategy and to disregard the use of force would necessitate a fundamental change to the anarchical tendencies of the international system.¹⁷² The fact that the use of force is one of the defining characteristics of strategy is also supported by Strachan and Gray whom both define and discuss strategy as the use of force to attain political aims.¹⁷³

The concept of force is thus inextricably linked to strategy, and must underpin any further analysis of the strategies of the NATO-countries. There is less consensus, however, in strategic theory on the method to analyse the use of force in a strategic context, and different views on how to employ and utilise force. My third factor will focus on the premise that the use of force is indispensable to strategy, and explore the different views governing the use of force in the three NATO countries in Afghanistan.

Operationalising the factor

The factor will examine the strategic outlook of each of the countries, that is to say, the prevailing beliefs, assumptions, and theories governing the use of force for political purpose in each country. The factor will emphasise the way in which strategy and the use of force was understood and accordingly how the countries applied force to realise their political purpose in the context of Afghanistan from 2003-2008. In

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.120.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

¹⁷¹ Howard, *The Causes of Wars and Other Essays*, p. 36.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

¹⁷³ Gray, *Modern Strategy*, p. 17; Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil–Military Relations after Iraq," p. 59.

practice the understanding of strategy and force will be deduced from the three countries' national policies and strategy documents, and their views on how to use force will be deduced from their strategic and operational doctrines as well as their actual operations.

The understanding of strategy and its relation to the use of force in contemporary conflicts may be summarised in two opposing views, the Clausewitzian or limited view, and the grand strategic, or broader view. At face value, this is a discussion of what means should be considered in strategy, however, the discussion also reflects differences in the understanding of what strategy is and what the use of force entails.

The Clausewitzian view linked strategy to the use of military force and defined strategy through the use of violence. His main work *Vom Kriege* dealt with war, strategy and force in relation to what could be achieved through the use of military force only. Clausewitz's limited view of strategy was of course a result of the scope of his work; his *magnum opus* was on war, not diplomacy or state building, and also a result of his perception of force as limited to violent force. The Clausewitzian view of strategy is somewhat limited compared to the grand strategic view coined by the British thinkers JFC Fuller and BH Liddell Hart, who distinguished military strategy from the broader concept of grand strategy. To Liddell Hart, Clausewitz's definition was similar to his own definition of military strategy except that Liddell Hart argued that military strategy dealt with '....the art of distributing military means to fulfil the ends of policy.'¹⁷⁴ This meant that the ends and means logic of Clausewitz *vis-a-vis* politics was retained, but it removed the concept of military strategy from its connection with force and fighting, and the Clausewitzian idea of the destruction of the enemy's military forces, making strategy a more palatable concept to grapple with during the war weary interwar period.¹⁷⁵ Liddell Hart's definition of military strategy also moved the concept away from the practical sphere of choosing where and when to engage an enemy towards a more general allocation of military resources. Perhaps more importantly, Liddell Hart expanded the view of what strategy was as he distinguished between military strategy and the overall

¹⁷⁴ BH Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare - Adaptability and Mobility*, 1942 ed.(Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1942), p. 63.(Emphasis in the original).

¹⁷⁵ Azar Gat, *A History of Military Thought : From the Enlightenment to the Cold War*(Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 676-77.

strategy of a state, its 'Grand Strategy'. To Liddell Hart war and strategy was not only conducted through the use of military means, but through the co-ordination and direction of all available means, the diplomatic, economic, military, financial and moral resources of a political entity '....towards the attainment of the political object of the war....'.¹⁷⁶ In this concept the more limited Clausewitzian view of strategy is relegated to the term military strategy, subordinate to the larger entity of grand strategy. The concept of grand strategy was spawned by the ideas of industrial and total war, influenced by the need to control and direct all national resources in wars of national survival, and direct multiple campaigns of millions of men on multiple continents. The grand strategic view provides the great advantage of being able to see a conflict in a wider perspective than a mere military one, and brings more resources and perspectives to bear in a conflict. This is evident in the three countries' overall strategy documents on Afghanistan where an important question in all three was the interaction between the military and civilian resources.¹⁷⁷ Grand strategy also brings the perspective of looking '....beyond the war to the subsequent peace', and attempts to bring to the forefront the long-term consequences of the force employed.¹⁷⁸ Both these perspectives are valuable in any conflict, but are indispensable in a complex conflict such as Afghanistan, where there was little force on force fighting in a Clausewitzian sense, and in which the political aims include rebuilding parts of Afghan society. The grand strategy view has also been influential in the emerging ideas in international crisis management, where ideas such as multifunctional operations, integrated missions and comprehensive approach have gained influence since the latter part of the 1990s.¹⁷⁹

The concept of grand strategy has its apparent limitations, however, as some authors have argued it employs too broad a view of strategy and that it dilutes the understanding and development of strategy, and consequently its applicability in complex limited warfare is limited.¹⁸⁰ The first problem is that the grand strategic view

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 680-81; BH Liddell Hart, *The Strategy of Indirect Approach* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd, 1941), pp. 187-88.

¹⁷⁷ HM Government, "UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Way Forward."; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan."; Norwegian MFA (UD) Norwegian MoD, Norwegian MJ, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Civilian and Military Efforts in Faryab Province, Afghanistan," ed. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Norwegian MoD, Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police (Oslo: FD/UD/JD, 2009).

¹⁷⁸ Liddell Hart, *The Strategy of Indirect Approach*, pp. 188 and 202.

¹⁷⁹ See: Barth Eide et al., "Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations," Introduction.

¹⁸⁰ Henning- A. Frantzen, "Proper War" and "War in Reality": *The Changing Concept of War*, Ifs Info (Oslo: Institutt for forsvarsstudier, 2002); Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," p. 43.

might create confusion between policy and strategy. Hew Strachan argues that the grand strategy outlook may result in ‘...the conflation of strategy and policy.’¹⁸¹ This means that the grand strategic view may lose the focus on strategy as the bridge between operations and politics, as grand strategy becomes policy. This criticism is somewhat unfair as Liddell Hart made it clear that grand strategy and strategy are different yet interlinked entities, and he was under no illusion that policy and grand strategy were ‘...practically synonymous.’¹⁸² What is a fairer criticism is Strachan’s argument that the focus on grand strategy and policy, as well as and the co-ordination of all available state resources may reduce the focus on strategy as a practical activity. Adopting the grand strategy view of force may lead to an under-appreciation of the manner in which force is employed in a conflict and that the purpose of strategy is to transform political purpose into a practical plan.¹⁸³

On a more fundamental note the view of grand strategy also uses a different understanding of force. The Clausewitzian view focuses on ‘...purposive and functional violence...’,¹⁸⁴ whereas Liddell Hart used the word ‘power’ rather than force, again indicating a broader view of what actually constitutes strategy.¹⁸⁵ The use of the grand strategy view may thus create ambiguity as to what is strategy as opposed to other forms of international and government action, but also make it unclear whose responsibility the actual development of strategy is. The Clausewitzian or limited view emphasises the importance of the use of violent force and gives the military an initiating role in developing strategy, whereas the grand strategy view with its use of power rather than force places the responsibility at the political level.¹⁸⁶ A further criticism of the view of grand strategy is that it does not fit in with the realities of contemporary conflicts. Grand strategy was a child of the vast industrial wars of the twentieth century with its total aims, and its hierarchical and all-encompassing structure is ill-suited to the small expeditionary wars and the crisis management of the last twenty

¹⁸¹ "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," p. 40; *Clausewitz's on War: A Biography*, pp. 109-10.

¹⁸² Liddell Hart, *The Strategy of Indirect Approach*, pp. 187 and 202.

¹⁸³ Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," pp. 50-51.

¹⁸⁴ Howard, *The Causes of Wars and Other Essays*, p. 85.

¹⁸⁵ Lawrence Freedman, 'Strategic Studies and the Problem of Power' in Lawrence Freedman, Paul Hayes, and Robert O'Neill, *War, Strategy, and International Politics - Essays in Honour of Sir Michael Howard* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 290; Liddell Hart, *The Strategy of Indirect Approach*, p. 188.

¹⁸⁶ Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, pp. 893-94; Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil–Military Relations after Iraq," pp. 65-66.

years.¹⁸⁷ In other words, the dilemma is whether we need four command and staff levels between Whitehall and Sangin to direct an infantry battalion or PRT in Afghanistan?

The two views of strategy and strategic behaviour are both fraught with shortcomings in the face of contemporary conflicts where small resources must be applied in co-ordination with many different actors. The first question within the factor of strategic outlook will explore how the three states understood strategy and use of force, whether they understood strategy in a limited or grand strategic sense, and consequently explore who had the main responsibility for the development of the strategy for Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008. Having examined the strategic outlook of the three NATO states as far as their strategic theory is concerned; the next step will be to examine how the strategic theory was translated into strategic and operational concepts. The actual use of force will be studied through examining the strategy documents available and an examination of the main framework of the actual operations of the three countries between 2003 and 2008.

The manner in which force was applied in Afghanistan was a result of the actual political purpose and aims directing the operations, but also a result of how the countries understood strategy, the conflict, and what concepts and doctrines were developed to guide the use of force in complex conflicts.¹⁸⁸ As pointed out by John Mackinlay, the Western response to Afghanistan became a meeting ground of different strategic and operational approaches, as different strategic traditions met to deal with the new type of conflict that Afghanistan represented.¹⁸⁹ Within the three countries there were different perceptions as to how to interpret the conflict, and consequently, the countries' approaches to the use of force differed. These differences were manifested in the different choices of doctrines. Doctrine must not be confused with strategy, as the former explains how an army prepares organisationally and mentally in general or in relation to specific type of conflict, whereas the latter is the practical choice of how to apply force to realise the political aim in a concrete situation.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Frantzen, *"Proper War" and "War in Reality": The Changing Concept of War*.

¹⁸⁸ Neumann and Heikka, "Grand Strategy, Strategic Culture, Practice: The Social Roots of Nordic Defence," p. 14.

¹⁸⁹ Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁹⁰ Douglas Porch, "Military "Culture" and the Fall of France in 1940," *International Security* 24, no. 4 (2000): pp. 167-68.

Strategy and doctrine can best be seen as existing in a reciprocal relationship. Doctrine may influence the range of strategic options seen as available when deciding an actual strategy and a choice of strategy may influence the doctrinal direction, but as far as this study is concerned doctrine in itself is not seen as the only determining factor in the choice of strategy only an influencing one.

This relationship between strategy and doctrine is illustrated by the relationship between the doctrinal approaches and the overall strategic concepts employed by the three states. The three states differed in their conceptual or doctrinal approaches to the conflict by calling their response either wars, PSO or counterinsurgencies.¹⁹¹ Examining and understanding the differences and to some degree aligning them is important to the effect of coalition operations in complex conflicts.¹⁹² The Norwegian forces operated the entire period without a counterinsurgency doctrine, or an updated tactical and operational PSO-doctrine. The Dutch on the other hand, relied on a mix of its PSO and counter-insurgency doctrines to strike a balance between forceful and conciliatory measures.¹⁹³ The British approach was initially a counter-insurgency based one, but its approach gradually became based on principles from conventional warfare, partly because of the circumstances but also partially by choice.¹⁹⁴ These doctrinal differences represented practical differences in the use of force in terms of operational issues such as defining security tasks within the mandate, how to relate to the Afghan administration and security forces, how to see the other international actors, and crucially, how to deal with or engage the Taliban insurgency.¹⁹⁵

In order to characterise the strategic behaviour of the three countries it is consequently important to examine the factor of strategic outlook; and explore what assumptions, beliefs, and perceptions guided the use of force and strategy in the states of Norway, the Netherlands and the UK.

¹⁹¹ Roberts, "Doctrine and Reality in Afghanistan," p. 49.

¹⁹² Mackinlay, *Defeating Complex Insurgency*, p. 59.

¹⁹³ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," p. 14; Gooren, "Soldiers in Unfamiliar Places: The Dutch Approach," pp. 56-59.

¹⁹⁴ Anthony King, "Understanding the Helmand Campaign: British Military Operations in Afghanistan," *International Affairs* 86, no. 2 (2010): pp. 323-28.

¹⁹⁵ Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, pp. 164-65, 200ff.

Chapter III: Norway

*“Happy is the land that need no military strategists”.*¹⁹⁶

The study of strategy and strategic behaviour revolves around the transformation of political aims through the use of military and other forceful means. The point of departure into the three states’ strategic behaviour was their political intentions and how these intentions were developed into more concrete political aims that gave direction to the use of military force. This logic is straightforward enough in theory, but less obvious in real life. All three states operated with a multitude of various purposes, objectives and aims at different stages of the period, and rarely were they put in a logical relationship to one another. In order to discern a logic that explains and orders the aims in relation to one another, I operate from the premise that a political purpose or intent must describe the reasons for the state’s involvement, or the highest order of what the states tried to achieve by using force in Afghanistan. The political aims and objectives will then support this intent, but cannot logically give meaning without seeing them in relation to the purpose. The political aims and objectives then in turn give meaning to the methods chosen and the means employed. I have not assumed that the state can only have one purpose behind its involvement. In the complex conflicts involving coalitions of liberal democracies all states will necessarily have to make strategy while balancing own interests, coalition interests, and public opinion. That the states then operate with various aims and purposes must be seen as a normal state of affairs, and not as an anomaly void of strategic logic.

Another challenge with studying the purpose and aims of the three states between 2003 and 2008 is that our perception of the complex conflict that was Afghanistan has changed immensely from the earliest stages until today. The conflict in Afghanistan changed radically between 2003 and 2008. There is a risk of understanding the period by looking at the situation in Afghanistan post 2008, or by emphasising the latter stages of the period, and therefore not understanding the context behind the changes during the period.

¹⁹⁶ Colin S. Gray, *The Strategy Bridge* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 136.

1. The Political Purposes and Aims of Norway:

The Norwegian involvement in the Afghanistan conflict preceded NATO's decision to take over the ISAF operations in August 2003. From late 2001 to 2005 Norwegian troops participated in the US-led Operation Enduring Freedom with combat engineers, special forces and air assets such as fighter-, surveillance-, and transport aircraft, whereas combat engineers and CIMIC teams were deployed to the pre-NATO ISAF contingents.¹⁹⁷ The Norwegian practice of contributing both to ISAF as well as Operation Enduring Freedom continued until the Norwegian Centre-Right government was replaced by the Labour-led coalition in 2005, when all contributions to the American led operations in Iraq and in Operation Enduring Freedom were discontinued.¹⁹⁸ Despite the changing forms of contributions, Norwegian participation in the ISAF-operations in Afghanistan was communicated as the main priority of Norwegian forces throughout the period of 2003 to 2008.¹⁹⁹

Political purpose:

The two Norwegian governments provided a plethora of aims and reasons for its use of force in Afghanistan. The various aims were rarely connected in a strategic logic that explained how the various purposes and aims related to one another or gave distinct direction to the use of force. On the other hand, it is possible to discern a twin set of overall purposes behind the use of Norwegian force in Afghanistan, and these purposes appeared to be consistent throughout the period of 2003 to 2008.

International peace and security:

The purpose that was presented consistently by the two governments, and that was at the top of the hierarchy of Norwegian strategic logic during the period, was Norway's commitment to the maintenance of international peace and security.²⁰⁰ The purpose was provided as the political and strategic logic by the centre-conservative

¹⁹⁷ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Status of Norwegian Contribution to ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom," ed. MoD(Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 2003).

¹⁹⁸ Jens Stoltenberg Norwegian Prime Minister, "Accession Declaration of the Stoltenberg II Government 19 October 2005," ed. Prime Minister's Office (Oslo: Prime Minister's Office, 2005).

¹⁹⁹ Kristin Krohn Devold Minister of Defence, "Minister of Defence's Statement to Parliament , 2 June 2005 " ed. MoD (Oslo: Norwegian Parliament, 2005); Strøm Erichsen Minister of Defence, Anne Grete, "Statement to Parliament: Military Contribution to Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq," ed. Norwegian Ministry of Defence (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 2005).

²⁰⁰ Petersen Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003," ed. MFA(Oslo: Norwegian Parliament, 2003).

coalition when the Norwegian government provided troops for NATO's involvement in the ISAF operation in the autumn of 2003 and was maintained throughout the period. The purpose of maintenance of international peace and security was closely tied one of the central tenets in Norwegian foreign and security policy; the support of the UN and to enable the organisation to "...manage international crises and conflicts...".²⁰¹ To the Norwegian government its political purpose was tied to the UN's resolutions enabling NATO's operations, and the fact that the UN declared that the situation in Afghanistan was a threat to international peace and security. The main rationale behind the Norwegian strategy, that of contributing to the UN and through the UN support the maintenance of international peace and security, was initially used by the centre-conservative government as the rationale behind the Norwegian support to both the directly mandated ISAF operation as well as the more indirectly mandated Operation Enduring Freedom.²⁰² After the 2005 elections, where the Labour-led coalition came to power, the political purpose was maintained as far as the NATO-led ISAF operation was concerned, but the support to the Operation Enduring Freedom was withdrawn.²⁰³ The government did this as part of its policy of strengthening its participation in UN-mandated operations rather than the *post hoc* mandates issued by the UN on Iraq and for Operation Enduring Freedom.²⁰⁴ As was made clear in the new government's accession speech, as far as the contribution of Norwegian forces to NATO was concerned, there were no significant changes; the political purpose remained that of contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security through supporting the UN's resolutions on Afghanistan.²⁰⁵ Indeed, if anything, the emphasis on the original political purpose was strengthened through statements by the government towards the end of the period. In 2007 and 2008 the Prime Minister, as well as his Minister of Defence and State Secretary in the Defence Department reemphasised the political purpose in the face of mounting domestic criticism as Norwegian forces in the Faryab province were facing a mounting Taliban uprising and became involved in heavy fighting. The state secretary argued that: 'We see our

²⁰¹ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper 42, 03/04 ", ed. Norwegian Ministry of Defence(Oslo2004).

²⁰² Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003" (2003).

²⁰³ This also included the Norwegian contributions to the Iraq operations.

²⁰⁴ Norwegian-Cabinet, "Norwegian Coalition Government Political Platform 2005-2009 " (Oslo:2005), pp. 11-12.

²⁰⁵ Norwegian Prime Minister, "Accession Declaration of the Stoltenberg II Government 19 October 2005," (2005).

presence [in Afghanistan] as part of our support of a UN-led world order.²⁰⁶ The Prime Minister argued that NATO's new plans in 2008 corresponded '...well with our established strategy based on the UN mandate', while the Minister of Defence argued that Norway was in Afghanistan because Norway was '...invited by the World Community through the UN.'²⁰⁷

NATO obligations

The Norwegian support to the maintenance of international peace and security was an overarching political purpose during the period. The purpose itself was of a nature that naturally subordinated other aims and objectives and it was closely tied to the central tenets of Norwegian foreign and security policy. Another tenet of Norwegian foreign and security policy and overarching purpose in relation to Afghanistan was the obligation to the NATO alliance. NATO had been the cornerstone of Norwegian security policy since 1949 but the Norwegian relationship with NATO underwent significant changes after NATO lost some of its interest in the potential security problems posed by Russia in particular, and in the Norwegian and Barents seas in general. By 2003, successive Norwegian governments had gradually transformed its relationship with NATO from that of a recipient of alliance security to that of a contributor to NATO's security operations outside the Trans Atlantic area. The contributions to NATO's operations, and the subsequent influence that such contributions could generate within the alliance, would in turn generate support for Norwegian interests. By 2003 it was thus: '...a superior goal to contribute to making NATO's operations successful and credible.'²⁰⁸

When Norway deployed its first small battalion group to Kabul in 2003 the purpose behind the deployment was not only described as maintaining international peace and security, but also to support NATO in its '...difficult and demanding task.'²⁰⁹ The purpose of supporting NATO and honouring Norway's alliance obligations was kept by the centre-conservative coalition throughout its existence, and

²⁰⁶ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?," p. 9.

²⁰⁷ Jens Stoltenberg Norwegian Prime Minister, "The Prime Minister's Speech at the Nato Summit," ed. Prime Minister's Office(Oslo: SMK, 2008); Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan."

²⁰⁸ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper 42, 03/04 " p. 25.

²⁰⁹ Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003," (2003).

was continued by the Labour-led coalition that took office in autumn 2005.²¹⁰ Just as in 2003, at the outset of NATO's campaign, the State Secretary for Defence argued in 2007 that '....as a NATO member we have a shared responsibility in living up to our joint promise of assisting the Afghan government', and the Minister of Defence would argue in 2008 that: 'We *are* in Afghanistan in solidarity with our NATO allies.'²¹¹ The purpose was described in terms of a general obligation, using NATO's decision to take on its ISAF obligation as an argument in itself, and did not explore the differences of opinion within NATO. The Norwegian obligation to NATO was on a general level, ensuring the success of the organisation so that NATO would remain a relevant security instrument to Norwegian interests closer to home, and particularly in the Barents and Norwegian Seas.²¹²

The two overall purposes of contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security and supporting NATO, were mostly presented as twin purposes and they were rarely discussed separately from one another. The possible incompatibility between the two purposes was rarely discussed, despite the fact that the role of the UN was a lot less defined than that of NATO, and the fact that the purpose of supporting a UN led world order was difficult to realise in Afghanistan given the limited role of the UN's UNAMA operations. Similarly, it was rarely discussed what Norway's solidarity to the NATO organisation actually entailed. As is argued below, the NATO solidarity that Norway presented as its political purpose was thus limited to a general support of NATO's operations.

Political aims and objectives:

The two political purposes behind the Norwegian use of force in Afghanistan were consistently communicated through the period of 2003 to 2008, although they were not necessarily precisely and clearly defined. The lack of precision became evident in peculiar situation of UN's involvement in Afghanistan and when NATO needed to reinforce its operations in the South. This also meant that the two purposes presented

²¹⁰ Kristin Krohn Devold Norwegian Minister of Defence, "Minister of Defence's Statement to Parliament , 2 June 2005" ed. MoD (Oslo: Norwegian Parliament, 2005); Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 9.

²¹¹ "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 9; Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan." (Emphasis in original)

²¹² Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 11.

were to some degree fraught with mutual inconsistencies in Afghanistan. One way that the Norwegian governments apparently sought to bridge the inconsistencies at the overall level, was through its peculiar emphasis on other aims and objectives. Most of the additional aims and objectives presented by the Norwegian government were mostly in line with the overall ISAF objectives, but given Norway's particular point of departure through its two political purposes, the aims and objectives were given a unique Norwegian interpretation. This Norwegian point of view emerged from a stronger emphasis of the international institutions involved, and created the backdrop from which the Norwegian political aims and strategy were developed.

Assisting the Afghan government

Given that the overall purposes of the Norwegian government were general rather than Afghanistan specific in nature, the aim of assisting the Afghan state did not follow logically from the purposes. There was no independent strategic logic following from the initial purposes to that of establishing and supporting an Afghan state. The aim of assisting an Afghan state only became logical when it was derived from the ambitions of the UN and NATO. When the two institutions' ambitions were incompatible, as was evident through much of the period, the Norwegian purposes suffered from the same incompatibility.

The political aim of assisting the Afghan authorities was throughout the period the main political aim of the Norwegian use of force in Afghanistan. The aim was closely tied to the subordinate aims of security and stability, improved governance, and reconstruction.²¹³ The aim itself and possible options were rarely discussed; the question of what kind of state the aim entailed was for the most part treated as given.

Security

The first objective tied to the political aim of assisting the Afghan authorities was that of providing security and stability. The Norwegian government initially thought to realise this aim through the deployment of a battalion group and support forces as part of ISAF's KMNB brigade between 2003 and 2005. The Norwegian forces initially

²¹³ See: Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003 " (2003); Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009 ", The Faryab Strategy, p. 3.

provided security to the *Loya Jirga* conference in 2003, and then contributed to general area security in Kabul and training to the Kabul City Police force. During stage 2 of the NATO enlargement, Norwegian security operations shifted its focus to relieving one of the two British PRTs in Northern Afghanistan as well as providing a reaction force to the RC North. The Norwegian security efforts were focused on the province of Faryab, with the aim of securing the reconstruction and government efforts of the PRT. The objective of providing security was not well defined or discussed in itself. Security was presented as a necessary condition for other processes to take place, ‘...a much needed foundation for development efforts,’ and described more in the sense of what not to do rather than how Norwegian force was to achieve security.²¹⁴ This is also borne out of the evidence of the absence of any major Norwegian military operations between 2005 and 2007. The small forces available to provide security, the Norwegian contingent rarely exceeded 400 troops between 2005 and 2008, could of course provide an explanation for the lack of discussion, but substantial discussion of how Norwegian force was to attain the objective of security was conspicuously absent from official documents before 2007.

In late 2007, the security situation in Western and Northern Afghanistan deteriorated and Norwegian forces launched operations with the aim of ‘...preventing the Taliban from gaining a foothold...’ in Western Faryab.²¹⁵ In conjunction with these operations late in 2007, the Norwegian Prime Minister explained the use of force in Faryab as necessary to prevent ‘...the Taliban and criminal factions from gaining a stronger foothold...’ in Faryab.²¹⁶ The PM argued that the operations were necessary in order for the situation not to deteriorate in the future, but the objective of providing security was only discussed in four lines out of a two-page letter. Furthermore, the PM did not explain or discuss the Norwegian view on security operations in general, nor did he discuss future security measures as a result of the altered situation.²¹⁷ Similar operations were launched throughout 2007 and 2008, but these operations did not result in any clarification as to how the objective of providing security was to be

²¹⁴ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 8; Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003" (2003).

²¹⁵ Sverre Diesen, CHOD Norwegian Armed Forces, "Status and Challenges in the Armed Forces," in *The Chief of Defence Annual Speech* (Oslo Military Society:2007), p. 11.

²¹⁶ Jens Stoltenberg Norwegian Prime Minister, "Why Norway Is in Afghanistan," *Aftenposten* (2007).

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

realised. In 2008, the Norwegian Minister of Defence discussed the question of Norwegian strategy in Afghanistan without describing the objective of creating security in any detail. The emphasis was on reconstruction, *Afghanisation*, and co-ordination between civilian and military resources. Thus, how Norwegian military forces were to actively provide security within its AOR was not outlined between 2003 and 2008.

This lack of detail when it came to providing security was reinforced by the publication of Norway's first and only strategy paper on Afghanistan, which was published in early 2009. In this strategy paper, the use of armed forces was only described as leading to the transfer of responsibility to ASF, but there was no description of how the armed forces should create security in the first place or what guidance the Norwegian forces were to provide in its support to the ASF.²¹⁸ Although the Norwegian governments did not appear to have a clear idea about how the Norwegian armed forces were to achieve its security objective directly, both Norwegian governments heavily emphasised the concept of *Afghanisation* throughout the period of 2003 and 2008. Despite the fact that Norwegian troops did not become involved in the training of the ANA until 2005, but were involved in minor training of the Kabul police, the governments' rhetoric always emphasised that security operations were to enable the ASF in its increased responsibilities.²¹⁹ This emphasis on *Afghanisation* became more pronounced and more clarified after the Norwegian forces took over the responsibility in the Faryab province, and ISAF in general took on the responsibility of training the ASF. By 2008 the Norwegian Defence Minister did not state any direct security tasks for the Norwegian armed forces in Faryab, but tied all security activity to the '....creation of a credible and potent Afghan Army, under democratic control.'²²⁰ Whereas the British government between 2005 and 2007 saw the armed forces' tasks as defending its PRT and securing the central triangle in Helmand, while training the ASF, the Norwegian government never seemed to discuss or clarify whether Norwegian troops were to actively take on the security responsibility in its AOR prior to handing it over to the ASF. Furthermore, the Norwegian government never moved beyond the idea of mentoring when it described the concept of *Afghanisation*. Where the British

²¹⁸ Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009 " The Faryab Strategy, p. 4.

²¹⁹ Minister of Defence, "Minister of Defence's Statement to Parliament , 2 June 2005", p. 1; Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003", p. 3.

²²⁰ Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan", p. 4.

government in 2008 and 2009 saw the mentoring of ASF as insufficient, and attempted to integrate British and Afghan security operations, no similar measures were described by Norwegian authorities.²²¹

Governance

Whereas the objective of security and how it was to be achieved was not subject to a thorough discussion, the two other objectives seen as underpinning the aim of assisting the Afghan authorities were subject to much more attention. The objectives of improving governance and assisting the reconstruction of Afghan society went to the heart of the matter of the Norwegian discussion of what it wanted to achieve in Afghanistan. Throughout the period between 2003 and 2008, the objective of improving the security through improved governance rather than direct security operations was emphasised. Both Norwegian governments were fully committed to NATO's concept of improving governance through the use of PRTs. Late in 2003, the Norwegian Foreign Minister committed Norway to the idea of supporting the British PRTs in Faryab and Mazar-e-Sharif.²²² To the Centre-Conservative government, this was the best way of providing stability and at the same time '...increasing the influence of the central government.'²²³ The model of the PRT was also supported by the Labour-led coalition after 2005 who supported the PRT concept, but further emphasised the PRT's role as a facilitator of civil-military co-operation and development efforts.²²⁴ Despite the wholehearted support and the emphasis of the model, the Norwegian objective of improving governance was not described in any great detail.

The PRT concept came with an inherent problem of balancing military security operations and improvement of civilian institutions, and this dilemma was not addressed publicly in any great detail by the Norwegian government. In 2003 the Norwegian Foreign Minister saw the role of the PRTs as having a direct role '...making the area safe....' and thereby creating a stable environment for economic

²²¹ Gordon Brown, "Transcript of Speech and Q and a Given by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on Friday, September 4 2009," in *Prime Minister's Speech*, ed. IISS (London: IISS, 2009), pp. 7-8.

²²² Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003", (2003).

²²³ *Ibid.*, .

²²⁴ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?"; Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan."

redevelopment. In the same speech to the Norwegian Parliament, he nevertheless set as a condition for the Norwegian participation that the PRT would be provided with '...the necessary security support functions.'²²⁵ The speech did not clarify the relationship between the governance objective, carried out by the PRT, and the creation of security in the province, and left it uncertain whether the Norwegian PRT should actively engage in security operations or not. This unclear relationship was continued after the new government came into power and the Norwegian PRT took on the responsibility for the Faryab province. The Norwegian PRT was in 2007 '...to facilitate and protect development activities, humanitarian aid, and to support the establishment of Governmental control over the entire territory.'²²⁶ Given the status of the ASF during 2007 and the level of insurgent activity in Faryab, the establishment of government control had to entail active security operations, but the political objectives did not seem to take heed of this. In contrast to the British and Dutch cases in 2006 and 2007 there were no discussions of the relationship between the PRT and the security forces, despite the fact that the insurgency activity had increased in general, and the unruly district of Ghowrmach was transferred to Norwegian control.²²⁷

The lack of discussion of the relationship between the objectives of governance and security as well as the general aim of assisting the Afghan government was also evident when it came to the use of Norwegian police personnel. Improving governance was explicitly tied to the enhancement of the ASF, including the ANP.²²⁸ In response to the task of training the ANP, the Norwegian government dispatched police trainers and by 2005 18 police advisers were deployed to support local police training. The police advisers were independent from the Norwegian PRT, although the PRT commander had input on the security aspects of the police operations, and the police trainers operated under a different judicial framework than the military security forces and even the PRT.²²⁹ This in turn led to disagreements between Norwegian police forces and the Norwegian military PRT commander on issues such as participation of Norwegian

²²⁵ Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003", (2003).

²²⁶ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?"

²²⁷ The district of Ghowrmach was originally a part of RC West, the district was transferred administratively to the Faryab province under RC North in 2008.

²²⁸ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 7.

²²⁹ Halvor A. Hartz, "Co-Operation or Confusion - Norwegian Police and Military Together in Police Training in Afghanistan", in *NUPI report* (Oslo: Norwegian Foreign Policy Institute (NUPI), 2009), pp. 22-23.

police in planned security operations and liaison with the ANP.²³⁰ Although the objective of improving governance was subject to more attention from the Norwegian governments, the means with which to achieve this objective and its relationship with other parallel objectives were not clarified and discussed.

When it came to the question of what kind of governance the Norwegian government wanted to support through its objective of governance, there was less ambiguity. Both Norwegian governments were clear that they wanted to strengthen the central authorities.²³¹ On the other hand, the regional aspect of governance was not clarified to the same degree. Compared to the Dutch and British governments, both of whom were directly involved in the appointments of provincial government, the Norwegian governments rarely involved itself directly in regional governance. Although the regional level was mentioned, the objective was discussed with the central government as a point of departure. It was only towards the end of the period that the Norwegian strategy specifically addressed the provincial and district levels.²³²

The objective of governance was thus given more attention than the objective of security, but the challenging aspects of the objective of governance such as its relationship to the objective of security and the inherent dilemma of dealing with local or central governance were not solved.

Reconstruction and development

Out of the trio of objectives that came out of the aim of assisting the Afghan state, the objective of reconstruction was given most attention and emphasis. The objective of reconstructing Afghan society could indeed be seen as more important than the other objectives and aims, as the objective was discussed in contexts that indicated that it was seen as a partial purpose behind the use of Norwegian force in Afghanistan. The Norwegian emphasis on reconstruction and development was a result of a logic where security and governance was seen as laying the foundation for development, but the Norwegian emphasis on development and reconstruction was also generated by own policy interests. During the initial NATO deployment, the

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 7; Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003", p. 4.

²³² Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009 ", The Faryab Strategy, p. 8.

challenges of reconstructing and developing Afghan society was presented alongside the two other purposes of UN and NATO contribution to Afghan security.²³³ During the period this strategic logic was not continued consistently, although throughout the period the various political aims were discussed with the need for development and reconstruction as a backdrop and in many cases any progress made in Afghanistan was measured by progress in reconstruction and development, rather than through progress made by security and improved governance.²³⁴ The reason why I nevertheless have chosen to treat Norwegian political ambitions in the fields of reconstruction and development as a subordinate objective rather than a purpose or aim was the lack of consistency and the tendency of both Norwegian governments to focus on the loyalty to the international institutions of NATO and the UN, whenever a comprehensive strategic logic was communicated.

The Norwegian governments' approach to the objective of reconstruction and development was somewhat different than that of the two other cases. Within the framework of assisting the Afghan state, the objective of reconstruction and development was from the outset kept at an arms length from the objectives of security and improving governance. The Norwegian governments provided approximately £350 000 in developmental aid to Afghanistan during the period and about 80% of this money was provided as aid to the central government in Kabul.²³⁵ The remaining 20% was allocated through different international organisations and Norwegian NGOs with an emphasis on the Norwegian efforts in Faryab. The Norwegian development funds were from 2005 divided in three main strands: humanitarian aid, improved governance, and long-term development.²³⁶

What was significant about the Norwegian objective of development and reconstruction was the way the Norwegian government sought to carry out this objective. The Norwegian strategy was to make the two elements of reconstruction, the humanitarian and the developmental, separate from the military activity on the ground through the use of civilian institutions, governmental and non-governmental. During

²³³ Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003", (2003).

²³⁴ Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan", p. 3.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 4; Rune Solberg, Lt Col Norwegian Army, "Development Gone Astray," in *Aftenposten*(Oslo: Schibsted, 2010, Dec 6).

the whole period in question, it was the policy of the Norwegian government to rely heavily on civilian agencies to carry out Norway's ambitions in the field of development and reconstruction.²³⁷ Utilising the capacities of NGOs was not unique for Norway, but in many ways, the consequences this created for Norwegian armed forces were. The humanitarian aid was seen as the prerogative of the NGOs, and on the few occasions that the Norwegian military forces attempted to engage it, the military was robustly rebuffed. On one occasion the Norwegian military PRT commander used an emergency fund to address what he perceived as a dire humanitarian situation in his immediate surroundings by financing the handing out of warm blankets and food by the local Afghan government. He was immediately corrected by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and instructed that this was not within the scope of his mission, and that the use of military resources in humanitarian aid and development would harm the work of the non-governmental organizations operating in the area.²³⁸

The development strand was likewise the prerogative of the civilian institutions. The Norwegian development efforts were from the outset set apart from the military operations. This was partly due to the nature of the efforts; the Norwegian government laid emphasis on development of human rights, educational development, particularly female education, rural development and anti corruption efforts, efforts not easily carried out by military forces.²³⁹ However, the separation of the development objective from the objectives involving military forces was a deliberate element of Norwegian strategic behaviour. Many of the Norwegian efforts in Faryab between 2005 and 2008 were not easily separated into development or improved governance, the latter being the defining function of the military-led PRT in Faryab.²⁴⁰ Between 2005 and 2008, the Norwegian government wanted to implement reforms in the police and justice sector, in local governance, and improve local infrastructure such as providing basic health care, building roads and wells, as well as mine clearing. All these efforts were within the

²³⁷ Cedric de Coning et al., "Norway's Whole- of- Government Approach and Its Engagement in Afghanistan," in *Security in Practice* (Oslo: Norwegian Foreign Policy Institute (NUPI), 2009), p. 24.

²³⁸ Marianne Johansen, "Was Told Off for Providing Food to Afghans", *Verdens Gang*, 20 April 2008; Anders Sømme Hammer, "The Armed Forces Want to Carry out More Development", *Dagsavisen*, 18 March 2008.

²³⁹ Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009 ", The Faryab Strategy, p. 3; Norwegian Prime Minister's Office, "Met with the President of Afghanistan," ed. Norwegian Prime Minister's Office (Oslo: Norwegian Government, 2008).

²⁴⁰ Minister of Defence, "Minister of Defence's Statement to Parliament , 2 June 2005 ", p. 1; Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 6.

scope of the Norwegian military forces' capabilities, indeed, the NGO with the greatest capacity for mine clearing was for many years dependent on military personnel for its training. Nevertheless, the Norwegian strategy was throughout the period to limit the use of military personnel to ASF training and direct security operations where needed.²⁴¹ From the outset the Norwegian government argued for a separation rather than co-operation between its military and civilian efforts. The military forces thus had no direct funds available, and were not intended to take an active part the achievement of the objective of reconstruction and development. Initially this concept was not codified, but particularly after the deployment of the Norwegian PRT to the Faryab province the concept of separating the military effort not only from that of NGOs, but also from other government actors such as police and the Foreign Service, became more evident. By the end of 2008 the Norwegian political direction had created a strategy whereby the military and civilian efforts were separated both in time and space. The first Norwegian public strategy from late 2008 and early 2009 worked on the tenet that '[t]he respective roles of the Norwegian civilian and military actors shall be clearly distinguished,...'.²⁴²

The political objective of reconstruction and development had a significant place in the Norwegian strategy in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008. The two governments' intentions were more consistent and their intentions were made clearer about this objective than the other objectives and aims. However, although the objective of reconstruction and development was more clearly articulated than the other aims and objectives, the objective suffered from some practical confusion on the ground particularly in relation to the military's participation in development and reconstruction, as well as its relationship to the objectives of security and improved governance.

²⁴¹ Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009", The Faryab Strategy, p. 5.

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Other political aims: Improved civil-military co-ordination and The Norwegian Model

The Norwegian Model

The way the political objective of reconstruction and development was interpreted illustrated an independent political aim pursued by Norway in Afghanistan during the period. The Norwegian government not only practiced, but also promoted a distinct model of civil-military co-operation, based on clear separation between military and civilian actors, called the Norwegian Model.²⁴³ The approach was gradually developed throughout the period and was laid out in detail towards the end of the period in the two strategy documents published early in 2009 and in June the same year, where it was described as ‘...the main thrust of our efforts in Faryab...’.²⁴⁴

The approach had the twin aims of improving the co-ordination of civilian and military efforts, while at the same time distinguishing clearly between the sectors. The approach was fronted as an alternative to ISAF’s comprehensive approach, and to the more COIN-based approach introduced by ISAF in 2008.²⁴⁵ The Norwegian model was tied to the overall Norwegian purpose of strengthening the UN in Afghanistan and utilising the UN as the hub of the civil-military integration.²⁴⁶ This tendency was prevalent prior to the change of government in 2005, but the new Labour-led coalition made the fronting of the Norwegian model to a political aim directing Norwegian strategy, as well as making it the preferred model in all of ISAF’s operations.²⁴⁷ Norway was one of the advocates of NATO adopting the concept of comprehensive approach in Afghanistan²⁴⁸, but in practice it’s own preferred model was heavily influenced by the ideas developed in the 2005 UN report on Integrated Missions, written by the later

²⁴³ de Coning et al., "Norway's Whole- of- Government Approach and Its Engagement in Afghanistan," p. 9; Geert Gompelman, "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan’s Faryab Province," (Medford, MA: Feinstein International Center, Tufts University, 2011), p. 22.

²⁴⁴ Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009 ", p. 4; and Norwegian Ministry of Defence, Norwegian MFA, Norwegian MJ , "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Civilian and Military Efforts in Faryab Province, Afghanistan," ed. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Norwegian MoD, Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police, (Oslo: FD/UD/JD, 2009), p. 3.

²⁴⁵ COMISAF, "Commander's Initial Assessment."pp.2.12-2.14

²⁴⁶ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 10; Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan", p. 5.

²⁴⁷ Norwegian Prime Minister, "The Prime Minister's Speech at the Nato Summit"

²⁴⁸ Daniel Korski, "British Civil-Military Integration - the History and Next Steps " *The RUSI Journal* 154, no. 6 (2009): p. 19.

state secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Defence.²⁴⁹ The Norwegian government made the aim of introducing the Norwegian model to a cornerstone of its Afghanistan policy in 2007, and reinforced it through 2008, before the principle was clearly stated in early 2009. It was argued that the Norwegian model was not in contradiction to the other models of NATO and ISAF, but was instead a third way that would involve the UN in the strengthening of the Afghan state.

The strengthening of the co-ordination between ISAF and the UN was not necessarily controversial. The Norwegian model and the new ISAF strategy emphasised the importance of tight co-ordination between NATO forces and the UN.²⁵⁰ However, whereas ISAF throughout the period saw this co-ordination as a way to bring the UN and NATO closer together in the field, the Norwegian government's approach was to separate the civilian components from the military components and using the civilian components to strengthen a more independent UNAMA operation.²⁵¹ This was a departure from the overall strategy of ISAF who throughout the period appeared to integrate the civilian and military components, and attempted to include the UNAMA in this.²⁵² Whereas ISAF through the period gradually developed political objectives conducive to a classic population centric COIN-strategy, where civilian and military objectives were fused, the Norwegian government developed a political objective based on separation between its military and civilian components. Civilian components such as foreign affairs representatives, development experts, and police advisers, as well as government funded NGOs were to co-ordinate and co-operate with Norwegian military forces in advance of major operations, but there was to be 'daylight' between the two components during operations in the field.²⁵³

The reasons for this departure from the more COIN-based model of ISAF could be explained through the different political purposes behind the Norwegian use of force in Afghanistan, in particular the purpose of supporting the UN. Support to the UN and its operations was an important part of Norwegian security policy to both

²⁴⁹ Barth Eide et al., "Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations."

²⁵⁰ COMISAF, "Commander's Initial Assessment," p. C-1

²⁵¹ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Civilian and Military Efforts in Faryab Province, Afghanistan," p. 4.

²⁵² and: Karl Eikenberry, "IISS Military Leader's Forum - Summary" (IISS, London, 10 April 2006); See: COMISAF, "Commander's Initial Assessment," pp. 2-21 to 2-22.

²⁵³ General Jon Berge Lilland, "Norwegian Comprehensive Efforts in Afghanistan," (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 2010).

governments, but the UN line was strengthened as the Labour led coalition came to power on a promise of working for ‘....a substantially strengthened United Nations.’²⁵⁴ The connection to the UN was strong in both governments as government officials in both governments sought positions within the UN, and took part in the development of UN operational doctrines such as *Integrated Missions*.²⁵⁵ The emphasis given to the role of civilian actors in development, reconstruction and improving governance during the period can also be explained by the dominant role of NGOs and other parts of civil society in Norwegian foreign policy. The Norwegian NGOs and in particular the Norwegian Red Cross had strong ties with both Norwegian governments, exemplified by the number of political actors with ties to NGOs before and after their time in office.²⁵⁶ Norwegian governments had traditionally taken pride in using NGOs as the operational instrument of Norwegian development and humanitarian missions, and the separation of civilian and military efforts in many ways fitted the traditional way of defining political aims in the sectors of development and humanitarian aid.²⁵⁷ Furthermore, the Norwegian model and the emphasis of this particular political objective could also be traced back to the Norwegian Armed Forces’ lack of experience in complex conflicts and counter-insurgency.²⁵⁸ The Norwegian Armed Forces did not have a specific approach to these types of conflict, and although they attempted to deal with the challenges of civil-military co-operation, their timid response to the criticism of their involvement in the objectives of governance, reconstruction, and development, proved their relative weakness *vis-a-vis* its civilian counterpart.

The aim of developing a Norwegian model and promoting it in Afghanistan illustrated an independent aspect of Norwegian political purposes and aims in Afghanistan during the period. The aim had substantial impact on Norwegian strategic behaviour as evidenced through the emphasis it was given. This in turn meant that compared to the two other cases, the debate on strategy took a different turn. Whereas

²⁵⁴ Norwegian-Cabinet, "Norwegian Coalition Government Political Platform 2005-2009 (*Soria Moria Erklæringen*)," p. 5. "...vil arbeide for et kraftig styrket FN." (My translation).

²⁵⁵ Barth Eide et al., "Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations."

²⁵⁶ At least 17 members of the political leadership of the two governments between 2003 and 2008 either came from an NGO, took up a position in an NGO after their term in office, or had previously worked for an NGO prior to taking office. The most notable example was the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, who came directly from the position of Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross in 2005.

²⁵⁷ de Coning et al., "Norway's Whole- of- Government Approach and Its Engagement in Afghanistan," p. 24.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

the UK and the Netherlands strove towards integrating its military security operations with that of the military and civilian PRT operations, Norway strove towards separation. Whereas the UK demanded that civilian political efforts such as the MFA and DIFD should adapt to and work alongside British military forces, and the Netherlands made its civilian PRT the focal point of integration, the Norwegian MFA gradually pulled out its lead representatives from the Norwegian PRT, and let NGOs operate independently.

2. Were the Political Purposes and Aims Adapted to the Nature of War, the Character of Complex Conflicts and Coalition Warfare?

The discussion of Norwegian political purposes, aims and objectives have provided an understanding of what the Norwegian governments involved in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008 wanted to achieve with their use of force. The next step in the analysis of the strategic behaviour of Norway, is to analyse the relationship between these political ambitions and the actual use of force. This part of the chapter will analyse how the Norwegian political intent was adapted to the nature of war and conflict in general, and how in particular it was adapted to complex conflicts and coalition warfare.

The Norwegian political purposes and aims may be illustrated in the following matrix:

Overall Norwegian purpose:	Contributing to the maintenance of a UN World Order.	Solidarity with NATO as a security organisation	<u>Ad hoc:</u> Reconstruction and development as a purpose
	Coalition aims and objectives	Independent Norwegian aims and objectives	
Political aims of a higher order	Assisting the Afghan government	Norwegian model: Improved civil-military co-ordination	
Political objectives of a lower order	Security		
	Improved governance		
	Reconstruction		

Adapted to the nature of war: instrumentality?

Although the two Norwegian governments operated with multiple purposes and aims throughout the period of 2003 and 2008, the purposes behind the deployment of Norwegian forces were remarkably consistent throughout the period. Whereas the UK appeared to disregard its original purpose behind its use of force in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2005 and develop new aims, the Norwegian governments, like the Dutch, stuck to its dual purposes of supporting its main security institutions the UN and NATO. This consistency was also evident in relation to other aims and objectives. Apart from minor developments in the objectives of security, most notably the change from relying on own security operations to that of mentoring Afghan security forces, the aims and objectives were almost static between 2003 and 2008. The only major

development evident in political aims was the development of the aim of proposing a distinct Norwegian approach to reconstruction, development and governance that was accelerated by the Labour-led government after 2005.

Although the Norwegian political aims were consistent, the strategic logic was not always clear as several of the various purposes and aims were fraught with mutual inconsistencies that were not properly discussed. The Norwegian strategic logic was founded on the premise of the UN and NATO agreeing on its policies and methods. During the period in question this was not necessarily the case, and the Norwegian twin aims of supporting the UN and NATO were difficult to uphold without inconsistencies becoming evident. The incompatibility between the UN and NATO policies was visible from the outset of NATO's operations, and was in many ways inherent in the mandate of ISAF's and NATO's operations when the presence and operational responsibilities of the UN was limited and ill defined, particularly regarding the UN's relationship to the military forces. The differences in opinion between the UN and NATO became even more visible towards the end of the period when NATO started to rely on counterinsurgency doctrines with integrated civilian and military command structures, whereas the UN wanted to keep the two more separate in practice. To the Norwegian forces, this pursuance of the twin purposes, both supporting the UN and NATO, became problematic as the command structure and other alliance partners started to implement NATO's new strategy late in 2008. The Norwegian forces were instructed to operate in ways incompatible with NATO strategy.²⁵⁹ The Norwegian government thus never appeared to resolve the dilemma between adhering to the NATO PRT model and promoting its own preferred model, as the Norwegian PRT lost control over most of the civilian Norwegian resources after 2007 just as ISAF tried to improve its civilian-military integration through the use of the PRT.

Another problem was the interpretation of what the Norwegian support of NATO and ISAF actually entailed and how far the support should extend. After the challenges of ISAF's expansion through stages 3 and 4 became evident early in 2007, the question of Norwegian support and reinforcement to Southern Afghanistan came up. This question created tension within the government, leading the coalition government to decline the use of Norwegian troops outside RCs North and Central.

²⁵⁹ Solberg, "Development Gone Astray (*Bistand På Ville Veier*)," p.1.

The political purpose of supporting NATO thus did not extend to sending Norwegian forces to RC South at a time when NATO struggled to generate enough forces there. This interpretation was not necessarily evident in the initial purposes stated, where the message was that Norway was in Afghanistan as part of a ‘....shared responsibility in living up to our joint promise of assisting the Afghan government in extending its authority across the country.’²⁶⁰

The Norwegian governments’ political intent was thus fraught with inconsistencies and incompatibilities stemming from the original purposes behind the Norwegian use of force in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the Norwegian public intentions were remarkably consistent during the period, particularly given the fact that the period included a change of government in 2005. However, consistency was not the same as clarity, for strategy to be an instrument of politics and specific policies, the political direction must be clear, and also relevant for the use force. Given the nature of the two main purposes behind Norway’s use of force in Afghanistan, one could argue that the ambition behind Norway’s use of force in Afghanistan was simply to pledge support for the UN and NATO and that there was sufficient clarity in the political intent for this. This is not a tenable position as Norway *de-facto* did more than maintain presence on behalf of the two institutions. Firstly, the purposes were to make both institutions relevant in Afghanistan, which indicates an understanding that active measures were needed for neither institution to fail. Secondly, Norway maintained operational control of its forces to a larger degree than what was strictly necessary. Thirdly, Norway was not content with letting either institution dictate its operational concept in Afghanistan, but actively promoted its own model of development and reconstruction based on its own interests. Finally, Norway developed its own strategy late in the period that illustrated the above-mentioned ambitions, and Norwegian armed forces carried out a series of offensive operations in the Faryab province initiated by Norwegian forces. The Norwegian governments clearly had ambitions with its use of force beyond mere presence and tacit support to the UN and NATO.

Thus, to what extent did the political purposes and aims provide clear direction for the use of force and were they relevant to the development of a strategy? The Norwegian purposes and aims during the period appeared to be of a very general

²⁶⁰ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 9.

nature. There were very few attempts to connect the overall purposes to time and space, thereby creating foundations for a strategy. The overall aim of supporting the Afghan state was never explained through areas of emphasis, and the subordinate objectives were not explained through the priorities of certain areas or functions that could provide a foundation for a comprehensive strategy. The objective of security was to be achieved through a general security presence, but not elaborated as far as to describe what areas should be prioritised. The lack of priorities and directions as to where and when force should be used, was also evident when it came to the objectives of improving governance and reconstruction, where the objectives only described general functions that were to be developed, but again, not when and where they were to be achieved. Compared to the British and Dutch political aims for Afghanistan, the Norwegian aims were a lot less concrete. The three states faced similar challenges in the taking on responsibility of a province, but where the British aims and objectives dealt with time and space issues in the central Helmand triangle and the Netherlands maintained its focus on the two main cities, there was no similar direction or detail in the Norwegian political aims. The Norwegian political objectives were never detailed enough to enable a choice between securing Maymaneh or the unruly district of Gwormach.²⁶¹

This meant that in many respects the Norwegian purposes and aims for Afghanistan were never developed beyond general Norwegian security policy. Both main purposes were lifted out of the general long-term security policies of both governments, and the Norwegian aims and objectives were not elaborated in any further detail with regards to developing a strategy that explained how the purposes and aims were to be realised through the use of force.²⁶² Of course, a counterargument could be that the Norwegian governments did develop its aims and objectives in more detail, but that they were developed on the ground in Afghanistan and not made available to the public. However, as late as in 2008 the Norwegian armed forces operated with the general purposes as its operational objectives, frequently complained that the different PRT contingents were allowed to develop its own priorities, and that

²⁶¹ Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009", The Faryab Strategy, p. 4.

²⁶² Norwegian MoD, "Norwegian Government White Paper 48:07/08," ed. Norwegian Ministry of Defence (Oslo2008), pp. 23-24; Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper 42, 03/04 " p. 25.

priorities *vis-a-vis* other government agencies were unclear.²⁶³ That the Norwegian political aims and objectives were not developed with the direction of the use of force in mind was further illustrated towards the end of the period when the Norwegian government developed its only publicised strategy for its commitment in Afghanistan. The strategy reiterated the Norwegian purposes and aims, but did not set out any priorities for the use of Norwegian force apart from establishing the need to develop the Norwegian model of civil-military co-operation and for the continued *Afghanisation*-effort.²⁶⁴ There was no direction as far the armed forces were concerned; the Norwegian armed forces were to participate in general security operations and continue the development of ANSF capabilities.²⁶⁵ The void of clear direction with respect to the use of force was illustrated by the way the strategy described the situation in the Gowrmach district (the only district singled out) as ‘.....characterized by conflict and weak governance’ and that the ‘...security challenges in the district may result in difficulties in finding partners for the development of the district.’²⁶⁶ The situation in the district obviously constituted a problem, but when the role of the armed forces was discussed in the next paragraph, the district was not mentioned and the problems described in the district were not addressed in relation to the Norwegian armed forces. The criticism of the Norwegian strategy of 2008 and 2009 as not being good strategy is to some extent unfair, as it the document did not deal with strategy in the sense that strategic theory would define it. The Norwegian strategy was to a large extent a policy document rather than a strategy, but it illustrates the lack of direction and clarity in Norwegian political aims and objectives when it came to prioritising efforts in time and space. The Norwegian political purposes and aims were developed with general security policy in mind, but did not to provide direction or rationale for the use of force in Afghanistan.

²⁶³ Tore Gjerstad, "Fire at NATO," *Dagbladet*, 13 August 2008 2008; Solberg, "Development Gone Astray", p.1.

²⁶⁴ Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009 ", The Faryab Strategy, pp. 3-4.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

Adapted to the nature of war: Unpredictability and reciprocity in strategy?

In strategic theory, the political intent sets the direction for strategy and provides the rationale and logic for the use of force, in the words of Carl von Clausewitz: 'How could anything else be conceivable?'²⁶⁷ However, the question of instrumental direction has to be combined with the next aspect of strategy; that the political intent is to be realised through the use of force in the realm of conflict and war. This means that the political intent must be suited to the unpredictability and uncertainty of war and conflict, and that it must stand the test of reality and the volatility of the actual conflict, and if necessary be adapted or changed if it is to be realised. There must be reciprocity between the ends and the means in strategy, between the political intent and the actual use of force. The question is thus whether the Norwegian political purposes and aims were adapted to the uncertainty and unpredictability of the actual conflict and whether the Norwegian strategic behaviour was characterised by reciprocity between its ends and means.

The main source of unpredictability and change in strategy stems from the fact that the political intent is to be realised by force against a living adversary or enemy. The enemy has a will of his own and will react to and counteract the force used against or in relation to him. The Norwegian political purposes and aims were not initially designed to deal with a specific enemy, instead Norwegian force was used in relation to a general security context where the adversaries were a broad array of '....armed groups associated with the Taliban and Al Qaeda....' as well as local warlords, clan leaders and regional power brokers.²⁶⁸ This broad definition of the adversaries was in line with the way ISAF described its opponents; all adversaries were lumped into a category of opposing military forces without an in-depth discussion of the opponents' diverging aims. This lack of a specific enemy was understandable during the years between 2003 and 2005 of the NATO operation when the focus of ISAF was directed towards the relatively secure area of Kabul, and its operations were limited to this benign area.

The Norwegian aims and objectives did not change significantly in relation to describing an active adversary after Norway took charge of the province of Faryab in

²⁶⁷ Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, p. 889.

²⁶⁸ Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003 (*Utenriksministerens Redegjørelse for Stortinget*)," p. 3.

2005, nor did it change significantly after the Taliban uprising reached the Pashto areas and started to pose a threat to the outlying districts in Faryab in late 2007.²⁶⁹ In 2005, during the deployment of the Norwegian PRT and the Norwegian take-over in Faryab, no enemy or adversary was discussed in relation to the Norwegian forces or the political aims they were there to achieve; the only reference to adversaries was a brief description of the Taliban and Al Qaeda still operating in the South of Afghanistan.²⁷⁰ The initial Taliban resurgence in Afghanistan was difficult for ISAF and the force contributing countries to detect, but from late 2006 and during 2007 it became evident that the Taliban was a powerful force in the South and East, but also that it was operating in force in Southern Faryab.²⁷¹ Despite this, the Norwegian political aims and objectives were not discussed in relation to this threat. Even as Norwegian forces engaged the Taliban forces repeatedly in 2007 and 2008, the political intent showed no sign of dealing with the signs of an active enemy. The Norwegian State Secretary of Defence argued in 2007 that the operational environment in Northern Afghanistan was '...largely permissive....', in contrast to the more conflict ridden Southern provinces.²⁷² The Taliban resurgence and the importance of the Pashto population was understood by the Norwegian government in 2007, but this did not generate any discussion as to how this would affect the Norwegian aims or how the Norwegian government was to deal with the enemy that was operating in the Norwegian forces' area.²⁷³ The only exception was the Prime Minister's article in late 2007 where he explained that the Norwegian forces were engaging the Taliban in order '...to prevent the Taliban and criminal groups from gaining a stronger foothold.'²⁷⁴ However, this acknowledgement of an adversary did not appear to influence the objectives of the Norwegian government or lead to a greater clarification of how Norwegian forces were to create the security that was needed in relation to other objectives.

A year later, the Norwegian Minister of Defence gave a speech to a military audience on the Norwegian strategy in Afghanistan without addressing the Taliban in Faryab, its aims, operations or capacities, or how it affected Norwegian strategy. The

²⁶⁹ See CHOD Norway's description of the Norwegian operations in Faryab in: Diesen, "Status and Challenges in the Armed Forces", pp. 11-18.

²⁷⁰ Minister of Defence, "Minister of Defence's Statement to Parliament , 2 June 2005 (*Forsvarsministerens Redegjørelse for Stortinget*)," p. 1.

²⁷¹ Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, p. 133.

²⁷² Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p. 4.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁴ Norwegian Prime Minister, "Why Norway Is in Afghanistan."

Taliban was only mentioned in relation to its pre-2001 rule.²⁷⁵ The interesting aspect of this speech was that it explicitly set out to discuss Norwegian strategy, and it went into great detail on the importance of strategy, arguing that ‘...tactics without strategy is the sound of defeat.’²⁷⁶ The speech did not lack details on other issues and went into detail on how the ANA’s 209th Corps was being developed, and in making the case for the Norwegian model of civil-military co-operation.²⁷⁷ This indicates that the Norwegian government did not see its political aims and objectives, or indeed strategy, as affected by or relating to an enemy or adversary despite its own armed forces being actively engaged in combat operations at the time.²⁷⁸ This perspective is also supported by the fact that the only published Norwegian strategy did not mention an enemy, nor did it mention the Taliban or any other forces opposing the Norwegian armed forces in the Faryab province.²⁷⁹ The strategy, developed in late 2008 and early 2009, did not describe any force(s) working counter to Norwegian political ambitions in the Faryab province. The only mentioning of any uncertainty in the province pertained to one of the border districts, where the situation was ‘...characterized by conflict and weak governance.’²⁸⁰ The strategy did not address questions such as who generated the conflict, possible reasons for it, or what the conflict was about, and thus did not describe how the political aims should be realised in the face of any opposition. In many ways the situation that the political purposes, aims, and objectives were to be realised in was not described differently from that of a natural disaster, as the political aims were described without relating to a live adversary.

The Norwegian political aims and objectives did not change significantly at any stage as a result of any development within the province between 2005 and 2008. This period saw a resurgence of the Taliban movement within the province, a marked increase in the number of attacks on Norwegian and ISAF forces, and the Norwegian forces engaged in active combat against this resurgence. The Norwegian political purposes, aims, and objectives were not adapted to the nature of war as far as the challenges of changing environment and the adversaries were concerned. This lack of adaptation and change even when the situation in Faryab seemed to call for it, leads to

²⁷⁵ Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan."

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

²⁷⁸ Diesen, "Status and Challenges in the Armed Forces" p. 11ff.

²⁷⁹ Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009".

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

the conclusion that the Norwegian political aims were not developed within a framework of a reciprocal understanding of strategy. The Norwegian political purposes and aims were designed and developed in a way that only allowed for the political logic to influence the strategic process and did not allow the logic of the nature of war to influence the political intent. It would appear that it was not adjusted to the practical realities of the conflict. Thus, the Norwegian political aims and objectives did not seem to have been adapted to the nature of war.

Adapted to complex conflicts?

The Norwegian political aims and objectives were not adapted to all aspects of the nature of war when analysed through the lens of strategic theory. The political purposes and aims, although thoroughly based on Norwegian security policy and consistent through the period, did not create a solid platform on which to build a strategy. The next question is to analyse to what extent the Norwegian political intent was adapted to the complex conflict that Afghanistan represented and further, to what extent the Norwegian government adapted its political aims and participation in the coalition to the situation of Afghanistan.

The first aspect characterising complex conflicts is the dichotomous character of the conflict where, from a Western perspective, aspects of primitiveness and modernity is displayed simultaneously and side by side. This is notable when it comes to the threats that the armed forces and other state actors are facing, which range from high to low intensity within the same area of operations. The same forces might thus have to deal with an enemy launching company size attacks, conducting terrorism, criminal activity, as well as political subversion and challenges to its legitimacy simultaneously.²⁸¹ The challenges posed by such composite, or hybrid, threats require a flexible response with a strategy able to combine the full range of kinetic and non-kinetic force.²⁸²

The Norwegian political purposes and aims between 2003 and 2005 indicated that the Norwegian forces were deployed without a proper understanding of the intensity level present in the Afghanistan conflict. The Norwegian purposes and aims described a situation in Afghanistan that was complicated and unstable, but the conflict

²⁸¹ Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, p. 7.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

was described in terms of a multifunctional peacekeeping operation similar to that of Kosovo. The task of the Norwegian and NATO forces were described in terms such as ‘....securing conditions....’ and ‘...creating stability....’, without any mentioning of an active opposition.²⁸³ This of course reflected the intensity of the conflict prior to NATO’s expansion outside Kabul, which was in many ways quite calm. On the other hand, less than six months into its Kabul mission, Norwegian troops experienced the full range of threats, from IEDs and rocket attacks via criminal attacks and ambushes with ATK-weapons. Despite this, the political aims and objectives did not change in any significant way. In 2005, the Norwegian Defence Minister outlined Norway’s new role as lead nation in the Faryab province without discussing the threats facing the mission, other than that describing the political and social challenges faced by opium production.²⁸⁴

The resurgence of the Taliban uprising reached the Faryab province in late 2006 and early 2007, and during the ensuing two years the situation in the province went from a cold to a hot insurgency with the Taliban actively holding ground and targeting Norwegian and Afghan forces. As noted earlier, this did not result in any significant change in the Norwegian political aims or objectives, but the changed situation did produce statements from the government relating to the intensity of the conflict. In 2007 both the state secretary of the Norwegian Ministry of Defence, as well as the Norwegian CHOD, gave their views on Norwegian strategy and the state of the Norwegian Armed Forces in Afghanistan. State secretary Barth Eide argued that it was clear that the Afghanistan conflict demanded high intensity use of force combined with operations facilitating governance and development. Barth Eide argued that ‘....more force must be applied in order to support the [...] reconstruction effort....’, and that ‘....we must not shy away from robust action when such action is called for.’²⁸⁵ His statement illustrated that the government realised that the conflict in Afghanistan had the varying level of intensity characteristic of complex conflicts. The problem was that his analysis related to Afghanistan in general and particularly the challenges of the NATO expansion in Southern Afghanistan. Nowhere did the state secretary make the connection between this understanding and the ends and means relationship in the

²⁸³ Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003", (2003).

²⁸⁴ Minister of Defence, "Minister of Defence's Statement to Parliament , 2 June 2005", p. 1.

²⁸⁵ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", pp. 5 and 8.

Norwegian-led province, and neither did his comment involve Norwegian troops, who were under his command. The Norwegian CHOD's statement after one of the Norwegian operations in November 2007 similarly illustrated an understanding of the varying intensity of the conflict. General Diesen described the details of the operation and saw the combat as a result of '....deliberate offensive operations against a well organised opponent.'²⁸⁶ General Diesen went on by describing the operation as a reminder of the fact that coin-operations in general were not won through decisive battles. He then went on to describe the benefits of the technological advantage that Norwegian troops had *vis-a-vis* their Taliban opponents. General Diesen did not elaborate on how varying levels of intensity created challenges for the Norwegian troops or how this influenced policy or strategy, or even operations. Instead, he focused the brunt of his speech (delivered to an audience of active and retired officers) on the importance of technological superiority and firepower. The General thus illustrated an understanding of the high intensity level of the conflict, but did not discuss the challenges of operating against a multiple set of threats engaging simultaneously. Just as Barth Eide's statement was a general security policy analysis, General Diesen's speech focused on the general aspects of military theory and technology. Nowhere in the General's speech was there any attempt to discuss how the use of force and the situation in Faryab related to Norwegian political aims and objectives.

The two speeches and statements of 2007 were the only public examples of the Norwegian government discussing the intensity level as part of an analysis of the conflict during the period of 2003 and 2008. The statements and analyses of 2008, including the published strategy, did not discuss the conflict in the light of multiple threats or varying intensity. Indeed, the public strategy did not deal with the question of an enemy or his ways of thwarting Norwegian ambitions at all. Norwegian government and military leadership thus appeared to see the conflict as posing the challenges of complex or hybrid warfare, but only in general terms. The analyses were not related to the Norwegian use of force in Faryab and it did not influence the political aims and objectives. The Norwegian political aims were thus not adapted to the challenges of complex conflicts as far multiple threats were concerned, and the changing nature of

²⁸⁶ Diesen, "Status and Challenges in the Armed Forces ", p. 13.

the conflict during the period in question did not change the nature of Norwegian participation and its use of force.

The second aspect of the question of whether the Norwegian aims were adapted to the challenges of making strategy in the context of a complex conflict was the question of longevity. A significant characteristic of complex conflicts is the fact that modern conflicts tend to be drawn out affairs without a conclusive ending.²⁸⁷ The Norwegian purposes, aims and objectives appeared to take this aspect of complex conflicts into account. During the entire period in question the publicly stated aims stressed the fact that the conflict in Afghanistan was a conflict that required a long-term perspective, and even that the end of the conflict would not be an all out victory. The long-term perspective was evident from the beginning of Norway's contribution to NATO's responsibilities in Afghanistan as the Norwegian centre-conservative government understood that '...NATO and Norway as a member of the alliance will have to stay in Afghanistan for a long time.'²⁸⁸ This view was continued by the succeeding government and communicated by various members of the administration. The Norwegian State Secretary for Defence argued that Norway had a '...long-term perspective....' on its commitment in Afghanistan, whereas the Minister of Defence a year later argued that '...we will remain in Afghanistan – also in the long run.'²⁸⁹ Paradoxically, the public strategy did not mention the long-term aspect of the conflict as it did not deal with time and space. The Norwegian political aims thus displayed that they were developed with the drawn out nature of complex conflicts in mind. The government also saw its commitment ending in an unclear fashion and not in an outright victory. The Norwegian CHOD argued that the 'Taliban will still be present the day we and NATO withdraw...' and saw the conflict in the timeless fashion that for instance Rupert Smith described.²⁹⁰ The Norwegian political aims and objectives were hence fairly well adapted to the out drawn nature of complex conflicts.

The third aspect highlighted in the discussion of complex conflicts and Afghanistan is the question of how the Norwegian political intent and the use of force

²⁸⁷ Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, p. 29; Smith, *The Utility of Force*, p. 292.

²⁸⁸ Minister of Foreign Affairs, "Minister of Foreign Affairs' Statement to Parliament 15 December 2003 ", p. 4.

²⁸⁹ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission? ", p. 9; Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan", p. 7.

²⁹⁰ Diesen, "Status and Challenges in the Armed Forces", p. 13.

related to the plethora of different actors and different tasks present in complex conflicts; or whether the political aims was adapted to the multifunctional and multinational requirements of the Afghanistan conflict. One of the political aims of the Norwegian government after 2005 was the improvement of the co-operation between civilian and military actors in Afghanistan. The aim was to strengthen the coordination by enabling the UNAMA and other civilian coordination instruments to take on the '...lead role...' at central and provincial levels.²⁹¹ The problem in Afghanistan was that in many ways UNAMA was not given the mandate, authority, or the resources to take the lead. The Norwegian emphasis on the UN thus appeared to be based on the hope that UNAMA would suddenly be able to co-ordinate civilian and military efforts, when the situation in reality was very different.

The Norwegian political aims and objectives were attuned to the challenges of multi-functionality and the challenges of making strategy in conflicts where multiple actors with different mandates and tasks operated. The challenge was that they were not in line with the other states of the coalition, or indeed the coalition's official policy. Whereas ISAF, spearheaded by the US and the UK, was trying to integrate the different actors along the lines of traditional COIN-practices, the Norwegian approach was to work for a clear separation between the different actors, in particular the military and the civilian actors. In many ways, this separation made it conceptually easier to engage with the challenges in Faryab as the military forces could focus on its normal task of fighting the enemy, whereas the other actors could carry out their tasks of reconstruction and development.²⁹² Apart from the fact that this approach differed from rest of the coalition, other problems arose during the period. Firstly, the Norwegian model tried to avoid the problem of the military dabbling in the art of reconstruction and development, and consequently prevented the military from engaging in quick impact projects (QIP) that could be detrimental to long-term Afghan socio-economic development. Examples of the failure of QIPs from other operations and sectors in Afghanistan are abundant, as the very nature of QIPs prevents the thorough long-term cross sector analysis necessary to create sustained development. In the Helmand province the British military initially got engaged in projects such as

²⁹¹ Norwegian Government, "A Strategy for Comprehensive Norwegian Efforts in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, March 2009 ", The Faryab Strategy, p. 3.

²⁹² de Coning et al., "Norway's Whole- of- Government Approach and Its Engagement in Afghanistan," p. 23.

donating advanced equipment to hospitals without ensuring that proper funding, wiring or training was in place, and without realising that the introduction of machines led to less work for labourers.²⁹³ Although the Norwegian model in theory left the difficult work to the more competent NGOs, the problem of separating the development actors from direct co-operation with those providing security became evident towards the end of the period as the security situation in Faryab deteriorated. The challenge was that the development was most needed in the Pashto areas in Southern Faryab, where the security situation was most dire. As the NGOs did not want to risk their projects, the development projects were concentrated in the Uzbek areas, where the situation was more benign.²⁹⁴ As the insurgency developed there were fewer areas where development projects could be implemented and less incentive particularly for the Pashto population to support the government. In practice, the model went counter to the very idea of ISAF's COIN-project, which saw the need to increase the support of the elected government particularly in disputed areas. The Norwegian model was thus a good model in a benign setting, but when confronted with the challenges of multi-functionality and multi-agency in a complex conflict, the model seemed less adequate.

Secondly, although the actors were to operate separately, there was still a need to coordinate in advance and for the long-term. Whereas the British and Dutch coordination and planning brought the different actors together in a joint planning process prior to deployment and during their operations, the Norwegian approach did not allow for a similar process.²⁹⁵ The Norwegian government had no joint planning process below the ministry level to bring the various actors together. In the field, the civilian coordinators; MFA officials; police; and military forces were only co-located, but no command structure was established and all actors were under the command of different organisations and answered to different authorities.²⁹⁶ The idea of coordinating the various actors was there, but as the military answered to its chain of command emanating in the Ministry of Defence, the MFA officials took orders from the MFA, the police officers from the Ministry of Justice, and NGOs could only be loosely controlled through incentives by the MFA and Ministry of Development. Hence, co-ordination was difficult to achieve in practice. The practical problems of co-

²⁹³ Fergusson, *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, pp. 180-81.

²⁹⁴ Solberg, "Development Gone Astray ", p.1.

²⁹⁵ Lilland, "Norwegian Comprehensive Efforts in Afghanistan."p.4

²⁹⁶ de Coning et al., "Norway's Whole- of- Government Approach and Its Engagement in Afghanistan," pp. 30-31.

ordinating the various actors were a source of great controversy between particularly the NGOs and the military forces who regularly criticised each other for either encroachment, absence or rigidity.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, the idea of improved coordination was further made problematic by the fact that all actors operated under different legislation and mandates making actual co-ordination in the field difficult and the question of co-operation nearly impossible.²⁹⁸ The co-operation between the various Norwegian actors was made difficult by the political aims of the Norwegian government which prevented any such activity, and the lack of any mechanisms to coordinate below government level exacerbated the problem of carrying out any operation with more than one actor.

When it came to other international actors, the Norwegian aims and objectives ran into difficulties when trying to co-operate with the host government and its security forces. Where the British aims and objectives were difficult to reconcile with the province governor's need for a power base, a similar problem with the elected regional government occurred in the more multiethnic province of Faryab. The power in Faryab was held by the Uzbek majority which tended to make its own population its priority rather than the Pashto population.²⁹⁹ As the insurgency had its origin in the Pashto areas the Norwegian government wanted a fair distribution of resources in order to build trust in the government in these areas. In the eyes of the Norwegian forces the insurgency was partly driven by the distrust of the Pashto population, but from 2005 to 2008 the Norwegian government did not manage to convince the regional government to make the Pashto areas more of a priority.³⁰⁰ This inability ran counter to the Norwegian ideas of unbiased development and reconstruction and counter to its ideas of good governance.

The purposes, aims and objectives of the Norwegian government were deeply tied to the idea of international law and human rights. From the first deployment of Norwegian troops it became apparent that other nations' troops and in particular the ASF either interpreted the rules of armed conflict differently than the Norwegians

²⁹⁷ For a few examples, see: Hammer, "The Armed Forces Want to Carry out More Development"; Johansen, "Was Told Off for Providing Food to Afghans."; Solberg, "Development Gone Astray."

²⁹⁸ Hartz, "Co-Operation or Confusion - Norwegian Police and Military Together in Police Training in Afghanistan," p. 23.

²⁹⁹ Gompelman, "Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan's Faryab Province," p. 9-10.

³⁰⁰ Solberg, "Development Gone Astray", p.1.

intended or they lacked the resources or the training to carry them out. A precursor to this problem became evident when Norwegian Special Forces were committed to the Operation Enduring Freedom operation Anaconda in early 2002. As the operation progressed it became evident that any prisoners or detainees taken would be handed over to either American troops or the newly inaugurated Afghan government. In both cases, the risk was that the detainees could be given the status of illegal combatants and end up in Guantanamo Bay. As the Norwegian government did not recognise this interpretation of international armed conflict the Norwegian political line became that “[...] Norwegian troops has only in a limited way apprehended prisoners”, a line that that could certainly be interpreted in the wrong way.³⁰¹ The problem of co-operating with local security forces persisted also after 2003 with the deployment of Norwegian troops under NATO authority. In 2004 Norwegian troops, as part of its joint operations with local police, detained and handed over suspects to the ASF. Again, this created the problem of how these detainees were treated, and once again whether the local authorities would hand them over to US detention facilities. The problem was solved through a series of memorandums of understanding (MoU) between the Norwegian (and other states) and the Afghan authorities in 2006 inspect the local facilities and follow up on the detainees. This was by far not an exclusively Norwegian problem, but as the problem persisted, Norwegian troops were left in the confusing situation of not knowing how to deal with suspected insurgents and other criminals because the Norwegian government was more concerned than other governments even after the MoUs were in place, and as late as 2008 the actual conduct of Norwegian troops was not clarified.

The Norwegian political purposes, aims and objectives were developed with the challenges of multi-functionality and multi-agency in mind, but as the aims prescribed a rigid separation of the various actors on the ground without developing proper mechanisms of coordination on the ground, the result was a confusing situation whereby the various actors in reality did not work towards common goals. Furthermore, the Norwegian political aims were not adapted to the realities of making strategy in the context of a host nation and other coalition partners operating with a different understanding of the actual conflict and its legal ramifications.

³⁰¹ Norwegian Secretary of State for Defence, "Norwegian Soldiers' Participation in Arrests in Afghanistan ", ed. Ministry of Defence(Oslo: Norwegian Government 2006), p. 2.(Letter to Amnesty Norway)

Adapted to coalition warfare?

The last factor that the Norwegian political intent will be analysed in relation to is the question of how the Norwegian political purposes, aims and objectives were adapted to develop strategy in a coalition with other states. One of the original political purposes behind the Norwegian involvement in NATO's operation in Afghanistan was the solidarity with NATO as an alliance and with the countries in the alliance; a purpose that was maintained through the period.³⁰² From the outset the Norwegian government's political intent was thus adapted to the fact that the Afghanistan operation depended on a coalition. Despite this, the Norwegian governments' relationship to the coalition was not as streamlined as the overall political purpose would indicate. The political purpose was not discussed in any detail regarding how far the alliance obligations would extend or what it meant in practice on the ground. This lack of discussion and clarification appeared to be a source of friction between Norway and other alliance members on several occasions, and created serious challenges for both Norwegian governments. The first challenge lay in the very reasoning behind the participation in the NATO part of the Afghan operations. The participation in NATO's operation in Afghanistan and the emphasis on ISAF operations could partially be explained by the Norwegian governments' ambivalence to the US led Operation Enduring Freedom. As this operation was sanctioned by the UN, but not directly mandated, it ran contrary to the main tenets of Norwegian security policy, which emphasised the UN's role in sanctioning the use of military force.³⁰³ This criterion was met in the case of ISAF and the Norwegian choice of deploying its forces under NATO auspices was thus preferred. The problem was that ISAF initially was a small force that relied heavily on Operation Enduring Freedom resources for its operations, and the limited AOR of ISAF meant that many operations on the outskirts of ISAF boundaries demanded a close co-operation between ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom forces. This co-operation created challenges for the Norwegian government, which tried to limit the co-operation and create a clear distinction between the two operations through the use of caveats and through the strengthening of ISAF

³⁰² Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan."

³⁰³ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper 42, 03/04 " p. 21.

capacities.³⁰⁴ This became particularly evident when the Norwegian government deployed F-16 fighters to ISAF, and publicly stated that the fighters would only support the Operation Enduring Freedom in cases of emergency but not on a regular basis.³⁰⁵ The problem for Norwegian troops was that other states did not operate with the same restrictions and co-operation between Norwegian troops and other ISAF coalition partners was sometimes problematic, let alone the co-operation with the forces under Operation Enduring Freedom.

The problem of Operation Enduring Freedom co-operation gradually diminished as ISAF expanded its area of responsibility into the areas previously under Operation Enduring Freedom command. This process was supported by the Norwegian government, but in turn created the challenge of defining the extent of Norway's support to ISAF.³⁰⁶ By the autumn of 2005 the Labour-led coalition had taken over government and came into power with an uneasy partnership with the socialist left on the issues of foreign policy and in particular Afghanistan. The new government found itself having to reinterpret the practical extent of its solidarity with NATO, ISAF and other coalition partners. This second problem of adapting Norwegian political aims to those of coalition and alliance partners emerged in late 2006 and early 2007. The NATO-states tasked with establishing control in the South and in the East began in late 2006 and early 2007 to look for reinforcements from other NATO countries. The Norwegian government received several requests from NATO and from individual countries such as the Netherlands, but decided in both 2006 and 2007 that a Norwegian reinforcement of the more controversial and violent operation in Southern Afghanistan was not in the best interest of Norway due to other commitments.³⁰⁷ Instead, the Norwegian government wanted to focus on Northern Afghanistan and to improve the co-operation between civilian and military efforts there. The question of solidarity with NATO and the other NATO states was hence brought to a head, and although the Norwegian government '...in principle....' did not rule out sending Norwegian troops outside the area of RC North, the Norwegian political purpose of NATO solidarity was in reality reinterpreted to exclude Norwegian participation in

³⁰⁴ Minister of Defence, "Statement to Parliament: Military Contribution to Operations in Afghanistan and Iraq."

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁶ Minister of Defence, "Minister of Defence's Statement to Parliament, 2 June 2005", p. 1.

³⁰⁷ Solveig Ruud and Kristine Meek, "Will Not Send Troops to Afghanistan", *Aftenposten*, 18 October 2006.

ISAF operations outside RC North and RC Central.³⁰⁸ The Norwegian (and other states') refusal to contribute forces to Southern Afghanistan in a time when the UK and the Netherlands felt faced with an undue burden did strain relationships inside the broader coalition as well as within the NATO alliance, calling into question whether the purpose of supporting alliance partners could be realised.³⁰⁹

The third challenge of adapting Norwegian political intent to the context of coalition operation emerged in relation to the independent Norwegian aim of improving the civil military co-ordination according to the Norwegian model. The model was distinctly different to that of other NATO states such as the US, and to the British or the Dutch models because it demanded a clear separation between military and civilian, that is both political and non-political, efforts. This model created problems within the Norwegian organisation as noted previously, but it also created problems *vis-a-vis* other coalition partners and as well as Norwegian forces on the ground. The challenge was first of all a conceptual one; Norway, as a coalition member pursued a different approach within its PRT than did its adjacent partners. During operations the Norwegian forces could not closely co-operate with civilian actors, which led to a series of operations where the focus was in practice, although not in theory, purely military in execution.³¹⁰ On the other hand, initially the conceptual problems were limited as every PRT in Afghanistan operated differently and with different organisations, and there was limited co-operation with other forces in the Faryab province. However, at the end of the period, in 2008, US' military forces and development agencies began operating in Faryab. The conceptual differences became visible quite early on as the US forces and agencies brought with them a different approach based on more integrated operations between the US Army and USAID. The disparity between American and Norwegian resources left the Norwegian troops with the dilemma of following its own path without adequate resources to follow through, or tow the American line, which was supported by both military and civilian resources.³¹¹

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ See: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 71.

³¹⁰ See CHOD Diesen on operations in: Diesen, "Status and Challenges in the Armed Forces ", pp. 11-13.

³¹¹ Solberg, "Development Gone Astray (*Bistand På Ville Veier*)," p. 1.

The Norwegian political purposes and aims were seemingly well adapted to the challenges of operating in a complex conflict within a coalition framework as the Norwegian government from the outset defined coalition solidarity as the very purpose of the use of Norwegian force in Afghanistan. The problem was that the coalition and alliance solidarity was not thoroughly analysed as far as its practical consequences and limitations were concerned. The Norwegian political purposes and aims ran into practical problems when they were to be realised by force alongside other states and members of the coalition. Although the Norwegian government's aims did not run into problems with the local authorities, as did the British aims, the Norwegian government's problems were those of its own allies. The challenges of adapting Norwegian political intent and the use of force to the ongoing Operation Enduring Freedom operations, the sudden refusal to support Regional Commands other than the North and Central, and the challenges stemmed from the government's pursuance of a different model for civilian and military co-operation. This revealed that the Norwegian political intent was not well adapted to the challenges of making strategy in the context of a coalition.

3. The Organisation of the Strategic Process in Norway

The structure

The next step of this study of Norwegian strategic behaviour is to analyse how the process of the Norwegian strategy was organised during the years between 2003 and 2008. The making of strategy is an inherently practical process which involves the bringing together of elected politicians, government officials of relevant ministries and military officers in order to transform the political intent into a practical plan for the use of military force. The way in which this process was organised and what part the participants played in developing the Norwegian strategy in Afghanistan was an important aspect when describing the Norwegian strategic behaviour during the period. What characterised the Norwegian organisation of its strategic process during the period was that it was designed to function against either major threats directed towards Norwegian home soil or low-level domestic threats. The organisation of the strategic process was neither designed nor was it adapted, to deal with violent and shifting complex conflicts far from the Norwegian homeland.

At the top, the Norwegian political and strategic organisation was led by the prime minister in charge of a cabinet constituted by the head of the different ministries. The cabinet's work was co-ordinated by the small administrative office of the Prime Minister, which mainly co-ordinated the cabinet meetings and the work of the Prime Minister. As compared to the Netherlands and the UK, there was a conspicuous lack of sub-ministerial committees to co-ordinate inter-ministerial work. There were no formal cabinet committees to deal with security or strategy issues, nor were there any permanent inter-ministerial sub-committees. Major security issues such as the decisions to deploy forces to Afghanistan and later to Faryab would be presented to the Norwegian Select-Committee on Foreign Relations, including representatives of the major parties in *Stortinget*, but these meetings were not public, and were conducted to keep the Norwegian Parliament informed, not to open up for discussion on how force should be used.

The individual ministries were the main vehicles of carrying out actual policies and providing advice to the political leadership within their areas of responsibility. In principle, the ministries were not organised in a hierarchy and no ministry had any overall co-ordinating powers, such as a ministry of the interior have in other countries. Situations that required a joint or a co-ordinated response, would have to be co-ordinated at cabinet level or directly between the ministries. For foreign crises or emergencies the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would take the lead, but as the Norwegian response to Afghanistan primarily consisted of military personnel, the day-to-day efforts in Afghanistan required substantial involvement by the Ministry of Defence. Further efforts from Norwegian police forces and development agencies meant that a Norwegian strategy in practice would require intimate co-operation between the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice, and Development, as well as the Ministry of Finance. Until 2007 there were no permanent co-ordinating bodies to co-ordinate or discuss the Norwegian efforts in Afghanistan, but in 2005 an '...inter-ministerial forum...' was established which involved the state secretaries of relevant ministries.³¹² This forum was not a permanent structure, but allowed for some of the co-ordination required by the Stoltenberg-II government's increased focus on comprehensive approach in Faryab.

³¹² Norwegian MoD, "Norwegian Government White Paper 48:07/08", p. 60.

The process of developing a Norwegian strategy for the complex conflict of Afghanistan was hence left to the full cabinet if it was deemed important enough, however, in practice it was left to the ministries of Foreign Affairs (including the Ministry of Development), Defence and Justice, whose resources were involved in the conflict. For domestic crises a system of co-ordination between the ministries was set up, but participation in these co-ordination mechanisms was dealt with in an *ad-hoc* manner.³¹³ This functional and separate organisation developed out of adherence of to the ‘...overall principles...’ of Norwegian ministerial government and crisis management.³¹⁴ The principles guiding the Norwegian government were proximity, responsibility and similarity, and entailed that government policy and any response to emergencies was handled by the ministry whose functional responsibility it was to handle this area normally. The organisation responsible for dealing with a situation was to be organised as similarly as possible to its normal organisation, and any emergency was to be dealt with as close to the problem as possible. These principles were designed and discussed in the context of dealing with domestic emergencies, but the idea of separating Norwegian efforts along functional lines was also the primary organising principle for operations abroad.³¹⁵ The three principles were the desired policy of both Norwegian governments during the period, and although criticised by a public commission in 2000, both governments maintained the principles of separation and decentralisation in all public documents during the period of this study.³¹⁶ Indeed, it was only in 2012, after the terrorist attacks of the previous year in which the co-operation between the police and defence forces were found lacking, that the Norwegian government argued for more emphasis on co-ordination and interaction between the ministries in response to crises. In its initial report after the terrorist attacks the Labour-led coalition introduced a fourth principle of ‘interaction’ between ministries as guiding the Norwegian response to governance and crises, but did not link this change to Norwegian development of strategy abroad.³¹⁷ The governments’

³¹³ Norwegian Ministry of Justice, "A Vulnerable Society: Challenges for Security and Readiness Efforts in Society," ed. Norwegian Ministry of Justice, Norwegian Public Inquiries (*NOU*) (Oslo: Norwegian State Information Service, 2000), p. 243ff.

³¹⁴ "Norwegian Government White Paper No 22 07/08: Societal Security: Co-Ordination," ed. Ministry of Justice (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Justice, 2008), p. 10.

³¹⁵ "Norwegian Government White Paper No 39: 03/04, Societal Security and Civil-Military Co-Operation," ed. Ministry of Justice (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Justice, 2004), pp. 28-29.

³¹⁶ "A Vulnerable Society: Challenges for Security and Readiness Efforts in Society," pp. 245-46.

³¹⁷ "Norwegian Government White Paper No 29: 11/12, Societal Security," ed. Ministry of Justice (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Justice, 2012), p. 9.

organisation along functional and ministerial lines grew out of the old Cold War security paradigm, where the main security threat was an existential threat to Norwegian territory, where major decisions would be made in the cabinet and the ministries would constitute the main players in an overall Norwegian grand strategy.³¹⁸ The organisation and the principles guiding it also made sense from the perspective of preventing an unnecessary build-up of power in peace time, such as a large body charged with the co-ordination of central actors in the government could entail. It also allowed for accountability and transparency where political responsibility was firmly placed at the head of a politically accountable minister who could be called and questioned by the Norwegian Parliament (*Stortinget*).

The problem with the organisation was that it was not well adapted to the challenges of long-term, low intensity conflicts such as Afghanistan, which required intense planning, co-operation, and co-ordination of multi-agency operations at sub-cabinet levels. As in all Western democracies, the deliberations on how to develop strategy in the 'Norwegian' province of Faryab was rarely considered a vital task of the nation, and if the question of Afghanistan did become politically noticeable it concerned the questions of whether Norway should remain in Afghanistan, casualties or concerns about cost or equipment. The subjects of making strategy and the implementation of the chosen strategy did not loom large enough to warrant consideration at the cabinet levels. The ministries involved in the actual co-ordination did not always agree on who was in charge of what in the process. The MoD and the MFA kept competing departments that assessed and advised on Norwegian security policy. The MFA and the Ministry of Development maintained strong ties with the Norwegian NGO community, thus limiting the scope of co-ordination with the MoD and the Armed Forces, whereas the Ministry of Justice always maintained that the use of Norwegian police was governed by a separate legal framework than the armed forces which in turn limited any potential co-operation between the two ministries.³¹⁹

This meant that the Norwegian strategic organisation and the process of making strategy were disjointed and separate from the outset and there were no structures that could encourage co-operation between the ministries. The relationships between the various ministries smacked of territoriality rather than a desire to co-ordinate and co-

³¹⁸ "A Vulnerable Society: Challenges for Security and Readiness Efforts in Society," p. 26.

³¹⁹ Hartz, "Co-Operation or Confusion", pp. 25-26; Børresen, Gjeseth, and Tamnes, Vol 5, p. 288.

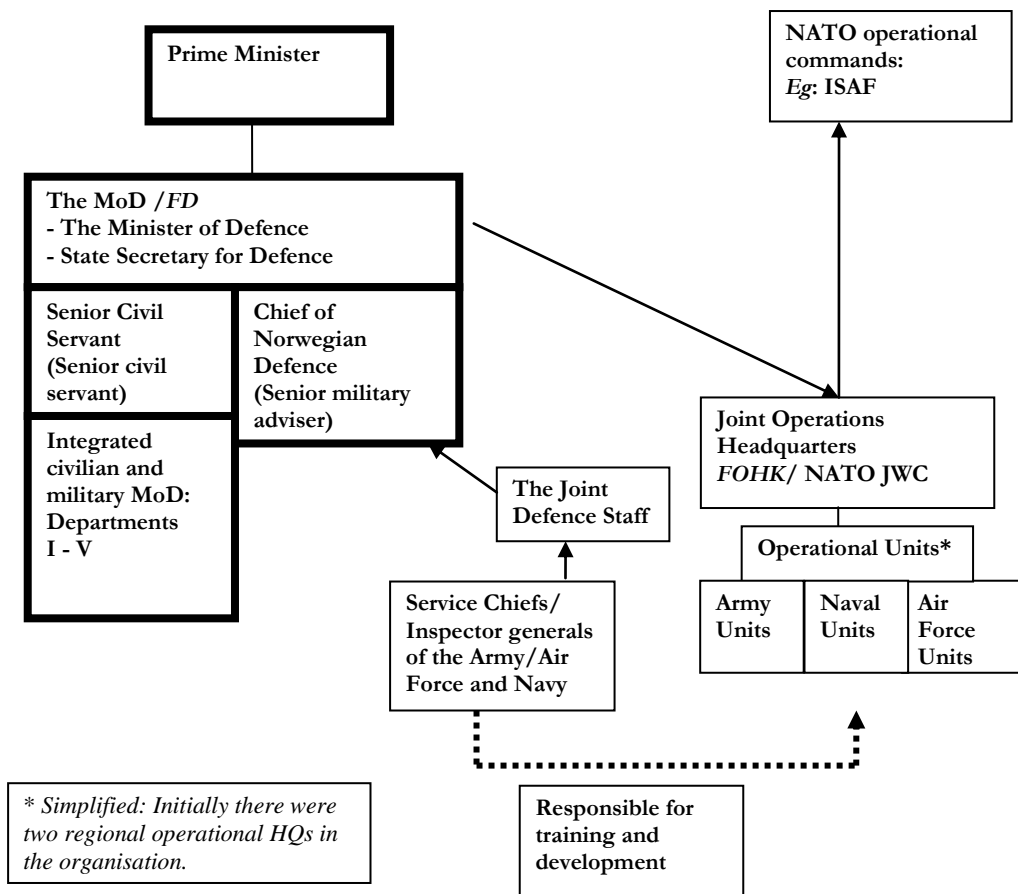
operate, and this had a significant impact on the choices of strategies that were available to the Norwegian government. The Stoltenberg-II government's policy of developing a distinct Norwegian interpretation of the comprehensive approach, whereby military efforts were separate both from political and non-political Norwegian efforts, was influenced by the principles guiding the overall political and strategic organisation which was already separated along functional lines. An interpretation of the concept of comprehensive approach along the lines of uniting military and civilian efforts, such as advocated by the ISAF, would require a break with the traditional Norwegian views on governance. The overall political and strategic organisation in Norway was thus designed to operate within a peaceful crisis situation or an absolute war context, and was not well adapted to the challenges of a complex conflict such as Afghanistan; fought abroad and requiring extensive low level co-operation between the actors involved.

The integration

The process of making strategy has been described by Eliot Cohen as the dialogue between '....soldiers and statesmen....' and that in order to make good strategy (and maintain healthy Civil-Military Relations (CMR)) this meeting must take the form of an 'unequal dialogue' and a 'dialogue of unequals'.³²⁰ The dialogue between these soldiers and statesmen is thus characterised by the premise that politicians have the final word in strategy, but also that officers have more practical knowledge about the use of force and have a duty to bring this knowledge forward in the shape of sound military advice. The manner in which this military advice was generated and dealt with thus becomes central to the study of the process of developing the Norwegian strategy during the period. Contrary to the studies conducted by Cohen, the Norwegian strategic process was not characterised by the meeting and exchanges between a democratically elected leader and his subordinate generals. In Norway, just as in the UK and the Netherlands, the pivotal structure when it came to generating and passing on military advice to the political level was the MoD. What characterised the Norwegian strategic organisation during the period of this study was a weakening of the military advice and a corresponding strengthening of the political and bureaucratic voices in the strategic decision-making process.

³²⁰ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, pp. xii, p. 12ff and ch. 7.

Figure: *The organisation of the strategic process in Norway*



The Norwegian Defence organisation had since the late 1960s vacillated between co-locating its MoD and its Defence Headquarters and keeping them separate. From 1985 to the late 1990s the two elements had been kept apart, but as a part of an overall downsizing and restructuring of the armed forces, the Labour government in 2001 argued for a merger between the Defence Headquarters and the MoD. This was initially voted down by the centre-conservative coalition that superseded it later the same year, who instead argued for a co-location of the MoD and a much reduced Defence Staff.³²¹ In a political compromise in June 2002 the initial proposition of an integrated MoD and Defence Headquarters was reintroduced and the so-called ‘...integrated strategic leadership....’ was established in 2003.³²² The initial reasoning behind the integration of the MoD and the Defence Headquarters from 2001 was divided into three main elements. The integration of the political and military institutions was seen as a

³²¹ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper No 55, 2001/2002: Implementation Proposition - Additional Framework for the Reorganisation of the Armed Forces 2002-2005," ed. MoD (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 2002), para: 4.1.

³²² Norwegian MoD, "Norwegian Government White Paper No 45: 00/01 'the Reorganisation of the Armed Forces in the Period 2002-2005'," pp. 97-101.

response to the changing operational requirements after the end of the Cold War whereby the armed forces were consistently used abroad in international operations. This made ‘....a continuous political-military contact...’ necessary as the operations both abroad and domestically were seen as more ‘....varied and challenging....’ than previously.³²³ The second and third lines of reasoning for integrating the political and military leadership were tied to the frustrations at the political level with the lacklustre performance of the Norwegian Armed Forces when it came to the transformation and reduction of the armed forces.³²⁴ The size of the armed forces’ command structure was seen as too large compared to that of the MoD, and both the Defence Headquarters and the MoD was seen as ‘....not having succeeded in their efforts to transform the armed forces during the 1990s....’, and that this failure ‘....for the most part had structural causes.’³²⁵ The introduction of the integrated MoD was thus based on a desire to improve strategic decision-making at the political and military interface, but more importantly, to take control of the process of transforming the armed forces from a Cold War to a post-Cold War setting. This view is reinforced by the 2002 proposition which did not argue for improved political and military interaction but instead argued for co-location of the military and political leaderships from a perspective of effective resource management and saving administrative support.³²⁶ The integrated MoD was not a result of a coherent idea of how to improve the strategic decision-making process; it was a way to increase the political and bureaucratic control over reluctant armed forces that had refused change for most of the previous decade. This is further evident in the way the new integrated MoD was structured after August 2003. The Defence Headquarters comprised of approximately 600 officers in relevant positions to the strategic decision-making process, whereas the old MoD had 200 civilians. The new integrated MoD cut the number of officers to 110 and maintained the 200 civilians.³²⁷ The CHOD kept an additional 183 officers to form his new Defence Staff which was to serve as his staff outside the actual MoD. The overall effect was to cut the number of officers in the strategic decision-making organisation by two thirds and maintain the level of civilians involved.

³²³ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

³²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*

³²⁶ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper No 55, 2001/2002: Implementation Proposition - Additional Framework for the Reorganisation of the Armed Forces 2002-2005," para: 4.1.1. Background.

³²⁷ Solveig Antila, "The Implementation of 'Integrated Strategic Leadership' (ISL)," ed. MoD, (Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Defence, 2007); Norwegian MoD, "Norwegian Government White Paper No 45: 00/01 'the Reorganisation of the Armed Forces in the Period 2002-2005'," p. 97.

The integrated MoD established the CHOD as the main military adviser to the Minister of Defence on par with the senior civil servant of the MoD. After 1970, the Norwegian CHOD was to be in general command over the armed forces but did not have direct operational command. The operational command resided at the joint operational HQs, and the CHOD's responsibility was thus not implementing strategy but to manage the armed forces and provide advice to the Minister of Defence.³²⁸ The problem was that the CHOD's ability to generate independent military advice was much reduced and relied mostly on the small Joint Defence Staff which was located outside the MoD. This meant that more of the military advice would be generated within the MoD rather than in the armed forces. This tendency was further reinforced in 2008, when the Defence Staff was reduced and the service chiefs (Inspector Generals) were relocated outside of the capital. This was done in order to '....establish a robust and transparent level of command in charge of force generation within the respective services.'³²⁹ The CHOD's Defence Staff was further reduced and service chiefs were thus further removed from the strategic decision-making process against the explicit advice of the CHOD who argued that this decision would '....significantly weaken the day-to-day running of the armed forces....'.³³⁰ Towards the end of the period, the ability of the CHOD to generate and formulate military advice was further reduced as his control over the military communications office was transferred to the Minister of Defence, reducing his ability to convey independent advice.³³¹ The establishment of an integrated MoD was thus meant to strengthen the political control over the armed forces, particularly in relation to the much needed transformation of the forces and resource management. The integrated MoD undoubtedly sped up this process and enhanced the ability of the armed forces to implement political decisions on transformation. However, the MoD was also designed to improve the quality of the strategic decisions in the more complex security environment of the early 21st century. The question is to what extent the politically robust and militarily weakened integrated MoD did just that, and how the integration impacted on the strategic behaviour of Norway.

³²⁸ In 1970 two joint operational HQs were established. This was reduced to one after the implementation of the integrated MoD.

³²⁹ Norwegian MoD, "Norwegian Government White Paper 48:07/08", p. 19.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

³³¹ Kristoffer Furberg, "The Chod's Power Is Reduced," *Nettavisen*, 30 January 2008.

From the outset, the advocates for an integrated political-military structure argued that such a structure would increase the strategic effectiveness, both in general and in the case of complex conflicts specifically.³³² Based on the previous findings on political aims and strategy, this claim does not seem to be warranted in the case of the Norwegian Afghanistan strategy between 2003 and 2008. In defence of Egnell, his argument on increased effectiveness of an integrated organisation was based on the employment of a '....comprehensive approach to planning and operations', an approach which the Norwegian government explicitly decided against. This also reflected the integrated Norwegian MoD. The integrated Norwegian structure did not have an office in charge of developing strategic alternatives or co-ordinating strategy, instead the MoD's focus was on security policy, long-term planning and proper resources management.³³³ The Norwegian CHOD did not have strategy making or implementation in his portfolio as he was not in operational command of the actual forces on the ground.³³⁴ The subject of strategy and how to co-ordinate, and implement it was therefore conspicuously absent from the Norwegian integrated structure.

The actual direction and conduct of the military forces was left to the military organisation, which brings us over to the second weakness of the Norwegian integrated structure which appeared to be the lack of professional military advice in the organisation. The need for political involvement in the development of strategy is viewed by the civilian supremacists such as Clausewitz and Cohen as a prerequisite to strategic effectiveness. Strategy is inextricably linked to politics; if strategy is to be rational it is but a means to the political purpose and the measure of strategic success is defined in political terms. The need to have political influence in the strategic decision-making process is thus undisputed and the integrated Norwegian structure doubtlessly strengthened the political influence *vis-a-vis* the military views given the relative increase in civilian personnel in the new integrated structure.

However, both Clausewitz and Cohen argue for a dialogue between the military and the politicians, and although the civilian political authority over the armed forces and strategic decisions is '...unambiguous and unquestioned....' the dialogue also

³³² Antila, "The Implementation of 'Integrated Strategic Leadership' (ISL)," p. 3; Egnell, "Civil-Military Aspects of Effectiveness in Peace Support Operations," p. 8.

³³³ See: Antila, "The Implementation of 'Integrated Strategic Leadership' (ISL)," p.4.

³³⁴ Norwegian Government, "Revised Instructions for the Chief of Defence ", ed. Norwegian Ministry of Defence(Oslo: Norwegian Ministry of Defence,, 2003).

presupposes a military that is able to form and argue recommendations based on a military viewpoint.³³⁵ Cohen argued for the right of the politicians to decide in the end, but at closer examination his argument is not for the politicians to ride roughshod over the armed forces but invite advice and then carefully and analytically probe it. The challenge with the Norwegian integrated structure was that although the military was brought into the political sphere in the MoD, their commanders were simultaneously left without sufficiently manned staffs to generate well founded military advice. The reduction of the military staffs meant that the advice generated was developed within the framework of the ministry and the distinction between what was advice based on the needs of the forces involved and what was based on political desires was difficult to separate. As Strachan has pointed out, this is a risk that all integrated structures run, but in the case of the Norwegian organisation it appeared that when it came to the development of a practical strategy in Afghanistan the military organisation was too reduced in size to offer relevant advice.³³⁶ The integrated civilian and military MoD in Norway did not appear to improve strategic effectiveness as far as developing a working strategy for Norway in Afghanistan. The two weaknesses of the Norwegian integrated structure appeared to correlate with the weaknesses of the Norwegian strategy noted earlier. The political aims and objectives were well connected to the overall Norwegian security policy as well as consistently stated throughout the period, but the political aims were not developed into practical directions for the actual use of military force. The political direction lacked clarity and detail when it came to how, when and where military force was to realise the Norwegian political aims in Afghanistan.

The absence of a strategy that dealt with the practical aspects of how to realise political ends with military force could thus be seen as a result of the Norwegian solution of an integrated MoD with a much reduced military component. This argument presupposes a Norwegian military ready to offer military advice, but whose advice was silenced by the confines of an integrated political-military organisation. But when one investigates the actions and the discourse within the Norwegian armed forces between 2003 and 2008 there is not much evidence for such a premise. Civilian supremacists such as Cohen and Feaver argue for the importance sounding off

³³⁵ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, pp.8 and 209.

³³⁶ Hew Strachan, "The Civil-Military 'Gap' in Britain," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 26, no. 2 (2003): p. 56.

alternative views within the armed forces when it comes to generating military advice.³³⁷ They argue that in the interest of improving strategy, politicians, although trusting their appointed advisers, should not generate military advice solely from the military chain of command, but from alternative sources within and outside the armed forces. For this to take place the appointed advisers through the chain of command must engage in an honest debate about alternative ways to employ military forces and explain the assumptions underpinning it, as well as stimulate their own organisation to develop alternative use of military force. Throughout the period, there were no examples of the Norwegian military organisation attempting to challenge or clarify the existing political intent or strategic direction. Instead the military organisation communicated the political aims *verbatim* down to the units in the field without any elaboration or further explanation, effectively leaving it up to the commander on the ground to determine Norwegian strategy during his six-month contingent in Kabul and Faryab.

During the period of this study the Norwegian Armed Forces showed no sign of developing or discussing alternative ways to employ force in Faryab. There were no overall reviews or reports evaluating its chosen strategy in Faryab, and the reports that were compiled mostly dealt with practical matters such as logistics and administration. There was also no debate within the armed forces about how to employ Norwegian force in Afghanistan. Throughout the period of this study the main Armed Forces periodical published only three articles related to the Norwegian strategy in Afghanistan. Two of these dealt with the subjects of counter-insurgency and complex conflicts in general terms, whereas the third dealt with the subject of civil-military interaction on the ground.³³⁸ Throughout the period, there was no debate within the armed forces as to how the military forces should be employed to realise the political aims, except for a few articles from officers on the ground in Afghanistan who questioned the wisdom of the Norwegian model and the inadequate size of individual units deployed, the latter of which was publicly reprimanded by the CHOD.³³⁹ Although the integrated MoD was not conducive to the generation of military advice, there is scant evidence to indicate that the integrated organisation actually suppressed

³³⁷ Peter D. Feaver, "The Right to Be Right: Civil-Military Relations and the Iraq Surge Decision," *International Security* 35, no. 4 (2011): p. 123; Cohen, *Supreme Command*, pp. 245-46.

³³⁸ See: *Norsk Militært Tidsskrift*, vols 2003-2009.

³³⁹ Solberg, "Development Gone Astray", Berit Almendingen, "CHOD Diesen Does Not Regret the Word 'Nonsense'," *Nettavisen* 2008.

military advice as the Norwegian military organisation did not seem to generate this independently.

The Norwegian integrated strategic organisation, just as the overall Norwegian government organisation, did not appear well suited to develop and direct a Norwegian strategy in complex conflicts such as Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008. The organisation was designed to provide long-term direction of the armed forces and to assert civilian control over the implementation of transformation of the armed forces, but did not develop an organisation that could develop a practical strategy and direct the use of Norwegian force in Afghanistan. The Norwegian integrated MoD became an organisation where the importance of military advice was reduced and which was not conducive to the generation of such advice, although the Norwegian military organisation did not appear to generate advice independently. The Norwegian strategic organisation between 2003 and 2008 thus appears to partially explain why the strategic behaviour was not better adapted to the nature of war and to complex conflicts.

4. The Strategic Outlook

Having explored the Norwegian political and strategic intent and the strategic organisation and process, the last step is to study what underlying 'assumptions and beliefs' concerning the use of force were present in the Norwegian strategic organisation.³⁴⁰ This will be done by studying the Norwegian governments' understanding of force and its understanding of strategy, before I examine the Norwegian military doctrines guiding the use of military force.

The Norwegian view of force

Both Norwegian governments between 2003 and 2008 displayed a limited and reluctant view of the use of force in international conflicts. The views of force reflected the rationale behind the Norwegian strategic organisation, where military force was reserved for a sizeable threat to Norwegian sovereignty, whereas in international operations force was seen as a supporting tool to other security policy instruments and therefore a tool of last resort.

³⁴⁰ Kartchner et.al., quoted as found in Lantis, "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism," p. 16.

The fundamental direction of the Norwegian view of force during the period was set out by the centre-conservative government in its white paper and overall policy document of 2004. In both papers the use of military force was described as important, and the papers argued that there were conflicts where military force was a necessary component.³⁴¹ Furthermore, both papers argued that military forces had inherent capabilities that made them useful in the early stages of an international conflict and emphasised that the military forces might have to take on tasks beyond its primary tasks if the situation was unstable and unsafe for other actors. From these general statements the papers deduced a more reluctant and limited view of the utility of force, in particular military force. First of all the papers expressed the view that military force would '....not be the dominant security policy tool when dealing with future security challenges.'³⁴² Although military force had a role in international operations, mostly in the initial stages of a conflict, it was often '.... not the most suitable tool but nevertheless the only available'.³⁴³ Military force could play a role in providing general security in an area, but the main thrust would lie with other security policy tools. The question of how military force was to provide security was not described in any detail and the role of military force in a prolonged conflict, beyond the initial entry phase, was not discussed. The reluctant and limited view of military force was carried on and reinforced by the labour-led coalition who in 2008 and 2009 argued that other security policy tools were '....often at least as important.'³⁴⁴ This was argued from a perspective of the Norwegian Model of Comprehensive approach where improved co-ordination was to be achieved through a clear separation of roles between the military and civilian actors, both political and non-governmental. This approach was to prevent military force from having a '....counterproductive impact....' in relation to civilian efforts.³⁴⁵

This limited and somewhat reluctant view of military force had its basis in the two governments' white papers and policy papers, and was implemented in the Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine which argued that given the need to address the underlying causes of a conflict, '....military means will often have a

³⁴¹ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper 42, 03/04 " p. 36.

³⁴² Norwegian MoD, "Strength and Relevance", p. 50.

³⁴³ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁴ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Strategic Concept 2009,"(Oslo: Norwegian Department of Defence, 2009), p. 69.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

limited role,...', a role limited to the creation of general security.³⁴⁶ The Norwegian governments' view of force was thus a reluctant and general one, where the use of military force was subordinate to other instruments of power. The view was consistent throughout the period and offered a way of understanding why the political aims and objectives described above were never fleshed into strategic and operational detail, and why the political intent was not adapted to the nature of war or complex conflicts. The view that the use of force, military and other, was a last resort and subordinate to other tools seemed to limit any serious thought about what force actually could achieve in complex conflicts and how to achieve it. The political and military policy papers never discussed how the military forces could create security in the first place or what to do if the military force did not manage to prevent outbreak of hostilities, beyond establishing that it was desirable for other tools that it did so. The policy documents never discussed under which conditions the use of force could be successful and how to best utilise the military means in international deployments. This meant that at the highest political and military levels there appeared to have been little time devoted to understanding the utility of force, and that they were unprepared to grapple with these questions when the situation in the Faryab province took a turn for the worse from 2006 and onwards.

The Norwegian view of strategy

Related to the two Norwegian governments' views on force were their views of strategy. The Norwegian governments' understanding of the term strategy during the period is difficult to pinpoint precisely. The term strategy was never precisely defined, yet used abundantly, which created the problem of precisely understanding how the governments understood the term. The Norwegian governments often used the term to describe any action taken to further an objective regardless of means, level or context. In addition, both governments used the term strategy most frequently as an adjective to describe something important or to describe anything influencing security policy. The Norwegian governments followed the trend pointed out by Strachan of using the term strategy interchangeably with the broader term security policy.³⁴⁷ The terms strategy or strategic was thus used to describe such widely different topics as the Norwegian policy to enhance co-operation between the North Sea countries in the

³⁴⁶ Norwegian Staff College, "Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine 2007," ed. Norwegian Defence Command (Oslo: Joint Defence Staff, 2007), p. 29.

³⁴⁷ Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy."

fields of logistics and procurement, the 'North Sea strategy', or to describe general commodities such as minerals, cereals and rice as '....important strategic commodities...'.³⁴⁸ The Norwegian governments' understanding of strategy was one where strategy was tied to the level of decision-making rather than the act of applying force. In its defence, the Norwegian government argued extensively that this approach followed suit from NATO and the US, and in many respects the Norwegian governments' use of the term was in line with both the UK and the Netherlands, but it nevertheless illustrates a very loose and wide understanding of the term.

Despite this imprecise usage, if the more narrow interpretations of Clausewitz and Liddell Hart are used, where strategy is the actual use of military force to further political ends, it is possible to acquire a more narrow understanding of the Norwegian view of strategy during the period. The Norwegian government employed an understanding of strategy that could best be described as a grand strategy. Its strategic concept of 2004 emphasised that the armed forces were but one of the tools available in a comprehensive approach, and this was further emphasised in the 2009-version.³⁴⁹ This was linked to the overall concept of comprehensive approach but also to the Norwegian interpretation of the concept where the civilian and military efforts were to be co-ordinated but given separate tasks.³⁵⁰ This meant that throughout the period the Norwegian governments' understanding of strategy was along the lines of Liddell Hart's grand strategy approach to the use of force.³⁵¹ This approach followed naturally from both governments' general understanding of force where a broad understanding of force and power was emphasised when it came to international operations. This was clearly also the Norwegian Armed Forces' view of strategy, which throughout the period, in addition to defining it as a general ends-means relationship, used Liddell Hart's grand strategy definition as well as his definition of military strategy as the distribution of military means '...to realise the military aspects of the political aims.'³⁵² This was also evident in the writings of the Norwegian CHOD during the period of the

³⁴⁸ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper 42, 03/04 " p.32; Norwegian MoD, "Strength and Relevance ", p.12; Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Strategic Concept 2009," p.15.

³⁴⁹ Norwegian MoD, "Strength and Relevance", p. 7 ; Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Strategic Concept 2009," p. 69.

³⁵⁰ "Norwegian Strategic Concept 2009," p. 71.

³⁵¹ Liddell Hart, *The Strategy of Indirect Approach*, p. 11-12.

³⁵² Norwegian Staff College, "Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine 2000," ed. Defence High Command (Oslo: Chief of Defence, 2000), pp. 35-36 ; "Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine 2007," p. 177.

study, General Sverre Diesen, who in his textbook on strategy discussed both Clausewitz's definition as well as Liddell Hart's definition before concluding with a definition similar to Liddell Hart's.³⁵³

As was the admitted weakness with the concept of grand strategy, the Norwegian governments' use of the term strategy was difficult to separate from its policies. Indeed in her 2004 introduction to its strategic concept, the Minister of Defence argued that the strategic concept '....provided the security policy and defence policy framework....' for the armed forces and that her strategic concept '....constituted the political basis...' for the armed forces. This tendency of a broad approach to conflate strategy with policy was pointed out by Liddell Hart himself who argued that grand strategy was synonymous with war policy, and the tendency was heavily criticised by Strachan in 2005 for leading to unclear objectives, responsibilities, escapism and, most importantly, missing Clausewitz's message that strategy was a plan for action.³⁵⁴ This appears to be the case also with Norway in Afghanistan during the period, as both governments used the term strategy in a manner that made it indistinguishable from its broader security policy, and struggled to translate its political intent into clear military objectives.

The question is whether the two Norwegian governments overlooked or neglected the challenges posed by the actual use of military force by emphasising the grand strategic view. Its strategic concepts and its white papers were indeed policy papers and were intended to be political despite the confusing use of terminology. The conflation of policy and strategy became more problematic when it came to the actual strategy for the Faryab province in Afghanistan. The Norwegian government's actual strategy documents from 2008 and 2009 were indistinguishable from its earlier policy statements and did not deal with the discussion of how, when and where the Norwegian forces were to be employed other than taking part in the training of the ASF. From a strategic theory perspective this meant that the Norwegian governments in effect did not develop a military strategy in Faryab, neither in the sense of Liddell Hart's distribution of military means nor in the Clausewitzian sense of linking a series of physical engagements to a political purpose.

³⁵³ Sverre Diesen, *Military Strategy: An Introduction to the Logic of Power*, (Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag, 1998), p. 17.

³⁵⁴ Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy," pp.50-51.

Furthermore, the choice of a grand strategy perspective could explain the lack of the practical aspects of war and strategy. The Norwegian governments' perspective of strategy was not concerned with strategy in relation to the practical aspects of war and conflict. In all the documents dealing with strategy, the term was never used in relation to an identified and designated living adversary or to the more practical aspects of deciding where, when and against whom its military forces should be engaged. This is another pitfall of a general or conflated definition of strategy, as it removes strategy from the realm of the practical planning aspects of actually employing force.³⁵⁵ The understanding of strategy and the choice of perspective on strategy could thus explain the lack of clear direction and the lack of an adversary in the Norwegian governments' description of its political and military objectives. To further exacerbate the problem, these deficiencies did not appear to have been rectified by the military organisation itself. Instead the armed forces in many cases applied the political aims directly to the tactical levels in its orders and directives, most notably in the national directives to its PRT commanders, leaving the tactical commanders with no conceptual links between their actions and the political intent; or in other words, in the sense of strategic theory there was no Norwegian military strategy in the Faryab province.

As noted above, the pitfalls of adopting a grand strategy perspective were to some extent clear to Liddell Hart as he advocated for his views on national and military strategy, but these drawbacks would be offset against the advantage of being able to co-ordinate all aspects of the national instruments of power and force, both military as well as civilian. This was also the Norwegian view throughout the period in question. The choice of a grand strategy perspective with its drawbacks could thus be beneficial if the co-ordination between the different means was good. The problem was that the organisation of the Norwegian strategic process was not designed to utilise this advantage and the successive Norwegian governments struggled to make the benefits of a grand strategy perspective a reality.

The Norwegian view of force and strategy led to a strategy that to a large extent dealt with power rather than force and was indistinguishable from the general Norwegian security policy. Consequently, the governments' understanding of strategy was one where the practical aspects of the use of force were not dealt with and the

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

possible benefits of a wider view of strategy could not be utilised. The Norwegian governments' views of co-ordination thus created a political and strategic organisation that was not designed to co-ordinate the various actors

Norwegian doctrine

The limited role of military force in realising the Norwegian political intent in Afghanistan was of course linked to the overall political purpose of strengthening international peace and security and in particular the offices of the United Nations. This in turn led to the development of the Norwegian Model where the limited use of military force was a cornerstone. Given this political purpose it is perhaps understandable that the policy papers of the Norwegian MoD did not provide detailed direction concerning the actual use of force and left this to its military organisation.

The Norwegian Armed Forces were loyal in its implementation of the overall political direction in Afghanistan but was in many ways ill prepared doctrinally to provide the direction for the use of military force in complex conflicts such as Afghanistan. Doctrine does not dictate strategy and does not explain everything about the actual conduct of military forces, but it does explain how armed forces conceptually prepare for certain conflicts and what options they consider prior to using force. In 2003 (or for that matter in 2001) the deployment to Afghanistan caught the Norwegian military unawares. As noted above, the Norwegian armed forces were being pushed politically to transform from an organisation based on a total defence structure to a force capable of intervening internationally. In 2003 the armed forces relied on a high intensity operational doctrine based on the ideas of manoeuvre warfare. This meant that although the military doctrine was conceptually more mobile it was still operating with a high intensity warfare mindset.³⁵⁶ Its doctrines concerning complex conflicts were limited to overall doctrines concerning classic peacekeeping operations and a reading guide at battalion level to the more complex PSO. This emphasis on high intensity warfare was kept throughout the period in question. In 2003 the main focus in the Norwegian armed forces was to develop the concepts of Network Centric Warfare (NCW) and Effects Based Operations (EBO) in a Norwegian context to supplement the existing doctrine of manoeuvre warfare. This direction was politically sanctioned as

³⁵⁶ See: Norwegian Staff College, "Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine 2000."

is evident from the explicit emphasis of technology, its emphasis on quality rather than quantity in the armed forces, as well as the direct references to NCW in the 2004 white paper.³⁵⁷ From the government and the military leadership this was seen in conjunction with the transformation of NATO's and the US' forces during the early 2000s. The Norwegian approach to this transformation was to take an active part and participate in NATO and the US operations with compatible and deployable niche resources such as special forces and forces trained for winter and littoral operations.³⁵⁸

The emphasis on a high intensity doctrinal approach was not subject to any discussion within the armed forces, on the contrary, the armed forces embraced the development of NCW. The development was headed by the future CHOD and given a lot of attention. General Diesen continued the emphasis on NCW and technology after he became CHOD in 2005 and it influenced his views on the operations in Afghanistan. His 2007 speech after the first major Norwegian operations in Faryab illustrated this as his summary of the engagement focused on the role of the special forces, but more importantly he analysed the entire engagement of '*Harekate Yolo*' in terms of Norwegian technological superiority versus its more technologically backward opponents.³⁵⁹ In 2007, a new Joint Operational Doctrine was issued which argued that the Norwegian Armed Forces were to operate along the three parallel 'approaches' of Manoeuvre Warfare, NCW and EBO, depending on the situation.³⁶⁰ Although it was possible to envisage the three approaches being applied in a complex conflict, in particular the EBO approach, the Norwegian Armed Forces nevertheless chose three approaches to its doctrine that were developed with high intensity warfare and force on force operations in mind.

Although the Norwegian high intensity doctrines did not differ too much from those of the UK and the Netherlands, the main difference was the lack of service doctrines and specific doctrines directed towards low intensity conflict. Unlike the Netherlands and the UK, the Norwegian Armed Forces did not develop peace support doctrines dealing with the changes in the field of PSO after 2000 such as the increased ambitions of the United Nations and the new United Nations doctrine in peacekeeping

³⁵⁷ Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Norwegian Government White Paper 42, 03/04 " p. 15.

³⁵⁸ Norwegian MoD, "Strength and Relevance", p. 73.

³⁵⁹ Diesen, "Status and Challenges in the Armed Forces ", pp. 11-20.

³⁶⁰ Norwegian Staff College, "Norwegian Armed Forces Joint Operational Doctrine 2007," pp. 53-54.

operations from 2008. Likewise, Norway did not develop any doctrines dealing with the problem of insurgency. Whereas in 2003 NATO and the US were focusing on high intensity, by 2006 most of the leading NATO countries had refocused their attention towards some form of counterinsurgency approach. The Norwegian armed forces never followed suit and did not change its focus from high intensity to low intensity doctrine but chose to await NATO's initiatives which did not come to fruition until after 2009.

This lack of a relevant doctrine to deal with low intensity threats could be explained by the reluctance of the Norwegian government to call the conflict in Afghanistan an insurgency and its reluctance to identify an adversary for the Norwegian forces. Instead of a counter-insurgency perspective, the Norwegian government saw the Norwegian forces in the Faryab province as involved in a robust peace support operation or a peace-building mission.³⁶¹ This could explain the lack of a low intensity doctrine with a counter-insurgency perspective, but still does not explain the lack of an effort in the field of PSO. The United Nations developed its robust peacekeeping doctrine during the latter years of the period, but no similar development can be traced in the Norwegian armed forces to this day even though the Norwegian government had increased United Nations participation in Afghanistan as one of its goals during the period.³⁶² A further argument against the political direction preventing Norwegian doctrine development is illustrated by a comparison with the Netherlands whose governments were also reluctant to adopt a counter-insurgency perspective of the conflict, yet its armed forces had developed extensive doctrines within the fields of both COIN and PSO and applied them to its operations.³⁶³ This meant that the Norwegian armed forces entered into the conflict with a set of doctrines based on high intensity conflicts rather than low intensity conflicts, and apart from a general participation in the development of the NATO counter-insurgency doctrine, they did not attempt to develop any Norwegian doctrines for Afghanistan during the period.

³⁶¹ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", pp. 1 and 5; Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan", p. 5.

³⁶² United Nations, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines," ed. Department of Peacekeeping Operations and Department of Field Support (New York: United Nations Secretariat, 2008), pp. 24-25.

³⁶³ Commander in Chief Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force (Adp II Part C)* vol. Army Doctrine Publication II - part C, Royal Netherlands Army Doctrine Publication (The Hague: Doctrine Committee of the Royal Netherlands Army, 2003); *Peace Operations (Adp III)*, vol. Army Doctrine Publication III, Royal Netherlands Army Doctrine Publication (The Hague: Doctrine Committee of the Royal Netherlands Army, 1999).

The lack of low intensity doctrines during the period does not fully explain the Norwegian strategic and operational behaviour, but it does indicate the level and intensity of discussion on the subject within the Norwegian armed forces as an organisation. Examined in this manner, the lack of low intensity doctrines goes far to explain the lack of military details in the realisation of Norwegian political aims and objectives in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008. Combined with the governments' reluctant view of military force, the Norwegian armed forces' emphasis on high intensity doctrines also helps explain the ease with which the Norwegian armed forces accepted its limited role in the Faryab province and how eagerly it accepted a purely military role within the overall Norwegian Model.³⁶⁴

³⁶⁴ de Coning et al., "Norway's Whole- of- Government Approach and Its Engagement in Afghanistan," p. 23.

Chapter IV: The Netherlands

*When it comes to strategy, amateurs debate theories while professionals discuss plans.*³⁶⁵

The Netherlands' involvement and use of force in Afghanistan, similarly to that of Britain and Norway preceded NATO's involvement in ISAF from August 2003. From late 2001, the Netherlands agreed to support the US in its Operation Enduring Freedom by relieving US' air and naval units in the Caribbean as well as the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea.³⁶⁶ The initial non-combat participation in Operation Enduring Freedom was changed to a deployment of F-16 fighters which provided air support to Operation Enduring Freedom from Kyrgyzstan alongside Denmark and Norway, as well as other air assets between 2002 and 2005. In 2005 the Dutch government provided a detachment of Special Forces to Kandahar which ended the Dutch participation in Operation Enduring Freedom in April 2006.

In addition to its contributions to OEF, the Netherlands was also instrumental in the early stages of ISAF. The Netherlands provided infantry units, as well as providing key HQ resources to the ISAF brigade HQ, between 2002 and 2003.³⁶⁷ From 2004 the Dutch contribution in the framework of NATO's ISAF operations took the form of an AH-64 wing in support of KMNB, and from 2004 the Netherlands established a PRT in the Baghlan province as part of NATO's stage one expansion.³⁶⁸ By 2005, the Netherlands elected to hand over its PRT to Hungary by 2006, and started exploring its participation in stages three and four of NATO's expansion. In early 2006 the Balkenende-III government persuaded the Dutch Parliament to take on the responsibility as lead nation in the Southern province of Uruzgan, as part of ISAF's Regional Command South.³⁶⁹ In July and August 2006, the Dutch government

³⁶⁵ AJ Echevarria, "Is Strategy Really a Lost Art?," *Strategic Studies Institute*, no. September 13 (2013).

³⁶⁶ The Netherlands Institute of Military History, "Enduring Freedom," (The Hague: The Netherlands Institute of Military History, 2009), pp. 2-7.

³⁶⁷ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (The Hague: The Government of the Netherlands, 2011), p. 18.

³⁶⁸ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan", (The Hague 2007).

³⁶⁹ For the government's decision (or intent) see: B.R. Bot, H.G.J. Kamp, and A.M.A. Ardenne-Van der Hoeven, "Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern

dispatched Task Force Uruzgan which consisted of approximately 950 troops, which included security detachments and a PRT, as well as an additional 250 troops as tactical and combat service support to RC South.³⁷⁰ The mission to Uruzgan was renewed in 2008, however, it was not extended beyond 2010, when the Balkenende-IV government collapsed on the issue of renewing the mission a second time.³⁷¹

1) The Political Purposes and Aims of the Netherlands:

The first step in analysing the strategic behaviour of the Netherlands between 2003 and 2008 is to examine the political intent behind the use of Dutch military force in Afghanistan. This will be done by establishing a strategic logic with a political purpose behind the deployment and use of force on top, followed by the lesser aims and objectives. As with the two other cases, there was no shortage of political aims and objectives, but less of an emphasis on establishing a coherent strategic logic when communicating the Dutch political intent in Afghanistan.

However, the case of the Netherlands offers a series of apparent paradoxes in respect to the description of its political purpose and intent in Afghanistan. The first paradox was that the political purpose of the Netherlands during the period at first glance appears to be a combination of the purposes of the UK and Norway. In reality the Dutch purpose was interpreted differently and was thus different than the other two cases. The second paradox was that in many ways the strategic logic and political purpose was clearer and more consistent in writing than what was at times communicated publicly. Connected to this was a third paradox; that despite the fact that the use of force in Afghanistan generated more political turmoil and domestic dispute in the Netherlands than in the two other countries, the political and strategic direction for the use of force was more consistent, clearer and realistic than was initially the case in the UK and Norway.

Afghanistan", (The Hague: The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands, 2005).The Dutch Parliament gave its support on February 2, 2006

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15. para: *Militaire Aspecten*

³⁷¹ The Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament, *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*.

Political purpose

Denying access to islamists

The government of the Netherlands did not explain its political and strategic logic in great detail in its public communication. The political purposes and the different strategic alternatives following from them were rarely explained or discussed explicitly, and the relationship between the purpose and its subordinate aims and objectives were not addressed in a way conducive to a debate on strategic logic and different strategic alternatives.³⁷² However, just as the two Norwegian coalition governments described the reasons for its participation in a fairly consistent manner during the period, the Dutch governments from 2001 consistently linked its use of military force or forces to the ambition of preventing Afghanistan from once again becoming a ‘....safe haven....’ for terrorists.³⁷³ This was the rationale given by the Dutch government for providing a PRT in Baghlan between 2004 and 2006, as well as taking on the responsibility of lead nation in Uruzgan from August 2006. That this was the overall Dutch purpose was also supported by the fact that most discussions in respect of Afghanistan were conducted as part of the main dossier named ‘Combating International Terrorism’.³⁷⁴ Both major troop contributions to ISAF from the Netherlands during the period were thus initiated for this purpose.

By 2007, the Balkenende-IV government did not provide the same attention to the purpose of counter-terrorism, but focused instead on international security and solidarity, as well as ‘....support of the Afghan government and bonds with the Afghan population....’ and humanitarian issues as reasons to explain the government’s decision to prolong the Uruzgan mission for an additional two years from 2008.³⁷⁵ The question of countering terrorism was not mentioned in the introductory ‘...core of the decision....’ but was instead relegated to the later discussions on future challenges and

³⁷² See for instance: "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation 20 October" (The Hague: The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands, 2006), pp. 4-6.

³⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 4; Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Why to Afghanistan?," The Netherlands' Ministry of Defence; B.R. Bot, H.G.J. Kamp, and A.M.A. Ardenne-Van der Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004" (The Hague: The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands, 2004), p. 2.

³⁷⁴ See: www.overheid.nl, dossier 27 925: *Combating International Terrorism*.

³⁷⁵ *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, pp. 4-5.

durability.³⁷⁶ In addition, the 2006 description of the Dutch Uruzgan mission published jointly by the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development did not mention the purpose of denying access to terrorists, but instead focused on what had earlier been described as a means, ‘...to promote stability in Afghanistan and support the authorities’ reconstruction efforts.’³⁷⁷ This contradictory way of describing and discussing the overall Dutch purpose of the use of force in Afghanistan may be explained by the composition of the government and the influence of the Dutch Labour party whose opposition to the OEF’s counter-terrorism operations was no secret. On the other hand, although the counter-terrorism purpose was downplayed from the introduction, the line of reasoning was the same and was presented as part of the strategic logic on why the Netherlands should stay in Uruzgan. The different emphasis may be explained by the different contexts of the publications, as the 2007-decision was a continuation of the original decision to deploy to Uruzgan and as such the 2005 statement may be seen as the point of departure. The aim of the 2006 joint publication appeared to be to provide the Dutch public with easily digested information about a politically controversial mission in which the more complicated issues of establishing a coherent political and strategic logic might not belong. The ensuing documents did not specifically establish a new purpose, but built on the previous documents.³⁷⁸ The Government’s evaluation of the Dutch mission in Uruzgan from 2011 emphasised the 2005 statement when it wanted to establish an overall and long-term ambition behind the Dutch deployment. It quoted the 2005 statement at length and argued that the purpose of supporting an Afghan government was ‘...’preventing [Afghanistan] from again becoming a safe haven for international terrorist networks.’³⁷⁹ This also illustrates a more natural strategic logic in which the purpose of the use of force was to deny access to terrorists, and the long-term means with which to deny the terrorists access was to establish a benign, legitimate and democratic state. Although the Dutch government did not communicate the original purpose and its strategic logic with equal emphasis throughout the period in question, it seems fair to conclude that the main political purpose behind the Dutch deployment

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5 and 18.

³⁷⁷ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," (2006).

³⁷⁸ *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, p. 7.

³⁷⁹ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), p. 21.

and use of force in Afghanistan was to prevent the country from becoming a safe haven for terrorists.

International peace and security:

The Netherlands' contribution to the OEF and the direct struggle against the Al-Qaeda and Taliban regime was different from both the UK and Norway from late 2001 to 2005 and indicated a different interpretation of what denying terrorists access to Afghan soil meant. While the UK and Norway were integral parts of the OEF's combat operations, the Dutch government made its contribution available to the US Central Command on the premise that their troops were not to be involved in combat operations in Afghanistan.³⁸⁰ Instead the Dutch government provided combat troops to the more internationally controlled ISAF and was an early and committed contributor to the security assistance force in Kabul. This emphasis on the international forces rather than the US' led OEF was also illustrated by the difference in perception between Norway and the Netherlands when the two countries deployed a joint fighter force with Denmark to provide air support to the OEF in 2002 and 2003. Whereas the Norwegian government saw the '....main task....' for its F-16 fighters as '....to provide close air support to personnel participating in Operation Enduring Freedom...' and if needed to provide support to ISAF, the Dutch government saw the deployment of the Dutch F-16 fighters in the same detachment as a chance to be '....able to guarantee its own air support for the Dutch infantry company in ISAF.'³⁸¹ This estrangement from the main anti-terrorist operation in Afghanistan continued well into the period of this study and illustrated that the Netherlands interpreted its purpose of denying terrorists access to Afghan soil in a different manner than did the UK. By November 2005, a month before the Netherlands' role in stage three of the ISAF enlargement was to be discussed, the Second Chamber passed a motion (the vanBaalen-motion) that effectively banned Dutch troops from being led by, co-operating with or supporting troops involved in OEF.³⁸²

³⁸⁰ The Netherlands Institute of Military History, "Enduring Freedom," p. 2.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8; Norwegian Ministry of Defence, "Status of Norwegian Contribution to ISAF and Operation Enduring Freedom."

³⁸² The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands, "Parliamentary Proceedings on Budget of Ministry of Foreign Affairs" (The Hague, 23 November 2005), cols. 1635-36; "Parliamentary Proceedings on Foreign Affairs" (The Hague, 23 November 2005), cols. 1635-36; The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), .pp. 46-47

The political purpose of denying terrorists a safe haven in Afghanistan should be understood in light of the Dutch governments' emphasis of the responsibilities of the Netherlands in the international community and its interpretation of its purpose as congruent with traditional international law and the law of armed conflict. All three Dutch governments during the period between 2003 and 2008 explained the political purpose behind its use of force in the context of an international response to an international problem of terrorism.³⁸³ The Dutch commitment to the international community and the insistence on understanding Afghanistan as an international problem rather than an American problem was a consistent feature of the Dutch governments' explanation of its political purpose throughout the period of 2003 and 2008. In contrast to the UK, which repeatedly perceived the purpose of counter-terrorism as relating to its own and US' security, the Dutch governments stressed the international aspects of the threats and the broader threat that terrorism constituted to regional and international stability.³⁸⁴

The implication was that despite its wording, the political purpose behind its use of force was more akin to that of Norway, who stated its political purpose for deploying forces and using force in Afghanistan was in support of an international world order through the United Nations, and in support of the NATO alliance.³⁸⁵ However, the Netherlands' understanding of international peace and security was different from that of Norway. The Dutch interpretation of international peace and security did not advocate for a direct involvement of the United Nations, but was explicitly based on a combination of '...self-interest and morality' as pointed out by Foreign Minister Bot in 2006:

*If a trading nation like the Netherlands fights for a more peaceful, more stable, more prosperous world, and for the strengthening of the international legal order, it is also acting in its own national interests.*³⁸⁶

³⁸³ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan", p. 6, para3.1; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, pp. 4-5; See: *Ibid. Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, pp.1 and 4.

³⁸⁴ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 4.

³⁸⁵ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", p.8.

³⁸⁶ B.R. Bot, Minister of Foreign Affairs, , "The Dutch Approach: Preserving the Trinity of Politics, Security and Development " in *The SID and NCDO Conference on Security and Development* (The Hague2006).

Although not emphasising the bodies of the United Nations, the Dutch governments were extremely concerned with the legality of its actions in Afghanistan. Throughout the period between 2003 and 2008, the Dutch political aims and objectives were often juxtaposed with the mandate of ISAF and the corresponding loose mandate of the OEF, and all three governments were extremely concerned with the relationship between the two operations and in particular the fate of possible detainees taken into custody by Dutch troops.³⁸⁷ This meant that compared to the UK, and even Norway, the Dutch political purpose was always discussed in relation to the United Nations' mandates for the ISAF operations. In contrast to the British government, which presented its political purpose behind its use of force as a British political purpose in its own right without explicit reference to the mandate, the Dutch governments always carefully related its political purpose to its legal foundation i.e. the mandates provided by the United Nations for ISAF.³⁸⁸

The political purpose of the Netherlands was to deny terrorists access to Afghan soil and to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for international terrorism. The interpretation of this purpose was, however, different from that of the UK as the Netherlands saw this purpose in the context of an international response to an international problem rather than a threat directly posed against the Netherlands. By emphasising the international community aspects, the Dutch political intent shared some of its foundation with the Norwegian political intent. The Dutch position was thus more explicit about its commitment to combating terrorism than Norway, but also more direct about the difference between the international response and the American-led response than the UK. The Netherlands thus occupied a middle ground position between the two other countries as far as the political purpose was concerned.

³⁸⁷ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 19; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, pp. 14-15 and 36.

³⁸⁸ John Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006," (2006); Compare for instance the statements to the two parliaments about the UK's and the Netherlands' participation in stage 3 of ISAF's expansion: *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, pp. 1, 12 and 18.

Political aims and objectives

Assisting the Afghan government

The main political aim of the Dutch operations in Afghanistan was throughout the period identical to that of the ISAF coalition: to assist the democratically elected Afghan government. Similarly to the other two states, the strategic and logical connection between the political purpose and the main political aim was not always thoroughly explained. Firstly, the political purpose of the Netherlands was intermittently communicated during the period. Secondly, the strategic logic following from this purpose was not fully explained as the Dutch government never seemed to discuss the alternative ways in which the political purpose could be reached, but instead automatically attached itself to the international community's set of aims of establishing a centralised state in Kabul. As compared to the two other countries of the study, the strategic narrative was consequently lost in the fray of the political debate, and made it difficult to understand why the Dutch government had sent troops to Afghanistan in the first place.³⁸⁹ By not taking its time to explain the logic fully during the period, the successive Dutch governments set themselves up for unnecessary criticism. In comparison to Norway, which never tried to explain the connection between its purpose and its concrete aims, and the UK which changed its political purpose twice between 2003 and 2006, the Dutch governments did provide a framework of a strategic logic where the political purpose and the immediate aims were connected in the same sentence. Instead of explaining why the purpose had to be realised through the building of a centralised state and commit to discussion of other alternatives, the Dutch government throughout the period went straight to statements about the success of the centralised state so far.³⁹⁰

The lack of a properly communicated strategic logic, particularly a discussion of alternative options to a centralised state was a problem of communication rather than substance, as the Dutch governments were far more willing to discuss local power dynamics within its province at a the political and strategic level than the two other

³⁸⁹ Lenny Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," *NL - Arms: Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies* (2009): p. 270.

³⁹⁰ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan."; *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*; Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004 " p. 2.

states.³⁹¹ However, just as in the two other states, the Dutch governments were unable to establish a strategic narrative where the political purpose was linked to the aim of assisting the Afghan state.

Security

The first objective linked to the Dutch aim of assisting the Afghan government was the objective of improving security in the areas where the Dutch were the lead nation. The way in which this objective was to be reached set the Netherlands apart from the two other countries, both in the actual conduct of Dutch troops, political advisors and other state representatives, and the emphasis and attention to the security aspects by the political level in the Netherlands. The Dutch view of how to improve security in its areas in Afghanistan appeared to have developed in three stages. The initial phase between 2003 and 2004, where the ideas of how to improve security were general and fairly imprecise in nature, the second phase between 2004 and 2006, in which the approach to security was shaped by limited threats of the Baghlan province, and the final phase between 2006 and 2008 where the Dutch way of thinking about security became more visible.

During the first year of NATO's operation, the political objective of improving security in Afghanistan was described by the Dutch government in very general terms. The aim of assisting the Afghan government was to be realised by '[...]creating a stable situation[...] in order for the Afghan government to gradually take over the responsibility for the security.'³⁹² These overall concepts were linked to the humanitarian situation and the implications on world and regional security if the Afghan government was left alone.³⁹³ Just as in Norway, details were scarce and the question of how the deployment of Dutch troops was to improve security and thus realise the aim of assisting the Afghan government, was not addressed. This may be explained by the lack of attention that Afghanistan commanded anywhere in the world in 2003 and 2004.

³⁹¹ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), pp.54-57; *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p.10.

³⁹² Minister of Foreign Affairs Bot in: The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands, "Permanent Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence: The Deployment of Dutch Apache Helicopters to Afghanistan," (The Hague: The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands 2004), p. 21.

³⁹³ See: *Ibid.*, p. 5.

Similarly to the UK and Norway, the Dutch use of force in Afghanistan was out-shadowed by the more controversial deployment of troops to Iraq. Furthermore, between August 2003 and June 2004, the Netherlands did not have any territorial responsibilities in Afghanistan, making a discussion of how the objective of security was to be attained an academic exercise.

From 2004, with the establishing of the Dutch-led PRT in the Northern Baghlan province, the attention to the objective of security appeared to increase. The territorial responsibility, as well as the experience of providing security in the Al Muthanna province in Iraq, appeared to increase the level of detail as to how the objective was to be attained.³⁹⁴ Given the relatively benign security situation in Baghlan, the emphasis was on improving security through enabling local security institutions and adapting to local conditions. This pragmatic and culturally sensitive approach clearly emphasised that the PRT was a 'guest' rather than an intruding foreign body in the province.³⁹⁵ The need for a deeper definition of how to create security was limited, as the Dutch forces were to leave the tackling of crime to the local ASF, and only deal with this security aspect indirectly by buttressing Afghan security institutions.³⁹⁶ The Baghlan deployment also illustrated the Dutch emphasis on civilian and military co-operation and how security was seen as integrated with civilian efforts and in particular with reconstruction. Whereas the concept of joint civilian and military operations was difficult in practice in the UK's operations, and all but banned in Norwegian operations, the Dutch deployment to Baghlan had a pragmatic and effective relationship between the military security aspects of the operation and the more civilian side of the operation.³⁹⁷

The third stage of the development of the objective of security came with the decision to accept the lead nation responsibility in the province of Uruzgan in RC South. Throughout 2005, the government of the Netherlands had expressed a desire to take part in the stage three expansion of NATO into the South of Afghanistan. By late December 2005, the government explained to the Dutch Parliament why and how this deployment would take place. In doing so, the government discussed in some detail

³⁹⁴ Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Arthur ten Cate, "A Gentle Occupation", *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 23, no. no 1, March 2012 (2012): p. 136.

³⁹⁵ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan ", pp. 8-9.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

how the objective of security was to be attained. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development outlined a security objective to be attained through what may be described as population centric counter-insurgency. Firstly, the security in Uruzgan was linked to the importance of ‘....winning the support of the population...’], by engaging with all elements of the population.³⁹⁸ In contrast to the Norwegian government the Netherlands interpreted ISAF’s operational concept as one of ‘.... winning the “hearts and minds” of the population’, and saw this as one the distinguishing factors between the OEF and ISAF.³⁹⁹ Winning the support of the people of Uruzgan would be done through active presence patrolling amongst all ethnic groups and with ‘....an open attitude....’.⁴⁰⁰

The emphasis on cultural sensitivity and respectful conduct of Dutch troops *vis-a-vis* the local population and government was carried on from the previous missions in Iraq and Baghlan. In addition to this somewhat basic concept was a clear undertone that the security operations would engage with the population not only in order to ‘be nice to the natives’, but also in order to change the existing power relationship and subsequently bring some of the disenfranchised tribes into the local and province government.⁴⁰¹

Furthermore, the three ministers argued for a strong link between security and development, and argued that the operations and organisation of the Task Force would reflect this. Compared to the UK and Norway, the understanding of the relationship between the security operations and the reconstruction efforts was better developed. The Dutch government argued for long-term reconstruction and development as the overall goal, but given the security situation in Uruzgan in 2005 and 2006, the security operations and CIMIC efforts were intended to bridge the gap until the Dutch government could enable other IOs and NGOs to begin long-term development and reconstruction.⁴⁰² The relationship between security operations and reconstruction efforts were far from perfect, but better balanced from the outset than in the two other

³⁹⁸ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 14.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁰¹ Hew Strachan, "British Counter-Insurgency from Malaya to Iraq," *The RUSI Journal* 152, no. 6 (2007): p. 8.

⁴⁰² *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 20.

countries. Norway never managed to balance the two efforts and did not desire a practical relationship between the security and reconstruction efforts, whereas the British strategy suffered from a lack of understanding of how the two efforts were to relate until 2007. The Dutch understanding of the relationship was in many ways summed up by the three ministries' 2006 pamphlet which argued that the relationship was summed up by the slogan: 'As military as necessary; as civilian as possible'.⁴⁰³

The 2005 statement provided general guidelines as to how the Dutch political level envisaged that its military forces should be used to improve security. The security operations were described in similar terms as the British objectives; the security detachments and Task Force would create secure zones in order to enable the PRT to carry out its tasks of improving governance and reconstruction. Furthermore, the Dutch government provided detail as to the time and space of these operations. The Dutch government explained that its main emphasis would be to focus its operations on the two main population centres of Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawood in the southern part of the province, and creating two main 'Afghan Development Zones' (ADZ) in these areas. By focusing on two ADZs it took over only two out of the existing four OEF bases in the province. This political decision provided direction as to where and when the security operations were to be conducted. The decision was based on the considerations of the security situation and the threats against the main asset of the Dutch operation, the PRT, and balanced against the forces available to protect the PRT.⁴⁰⁴ Although the statement of December 2005 did not argue from a military theory or doctrinal standpoint, the priorities provided for the security objective and set the stage for the later operational pattern in Uruzgan. Moreover, although not mentioned in the political statement, this incremental and gradual approach was in line with the 2003 Dutch doctrine of counterinsurgency on how to plan a counterinsurgency campaign or operation.⁴⁰⁵ From August 2006 the Dutch forces initially focused on establishing its main bases in the two population centres and ADZs of Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawood, both in the Southern part of Uruzgan, before attempting to link these in the ensuing years. Only when the main areas were secured, did the Dutch forces

⁴⁰³ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," pp. 14 and 20.

⁴⁰⁴ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁰⁵ Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, pp. 637-42.

attempt to expand its secure areas into the Baluchi Valley and the Chora district.⁴⁰⁶ This was in turn done by allowing the ASF to front the operations in the urban areas whereas the Dutch security forces provided area security. This classic, incremental counter-insurgency approach to security was described as an 'ink blot' approach by the Dutch military during the autumn and winter of 2006 and the term was also gradually adopted by the political and ministerial levels who described the security operations as pursuing an '[...]ink-blots strategy'.⁴⁰⁷

By 2007, during the debate about the renewal of the Dutch Task Force in Uruzgan, the level of detail of how to use Dutch force in order to achieve the objective of security was increased. The overall approach to the use of military forces to create security continued to focus on the respectful and open attitude from the military forces, combined with a desire to engage with the local population at local level. The aim of this approach to security was to expand the support for the Afghan government. The relationship between the security focused battle group and the 'core of the mission', the PRT, was maintained, and the 'ink-spot strategy' was explained in more detail.⁴⁰⁸ The incremental and gradual expansion of the ADZ, or ink spot, through the security operations was linked to the securing of the main populated areas in the Chora district. This would bring approximately 50% of the population in Uruzgan under Afghan governmental influence, although Dutch and ASF were in control of a small part of the province as a whole.⁴⁰⁹ By the end of the period, the objective of security was thus described in more detail than five years earlier. The political objective had changed from an abstract and general idea about creating a stable environment with the use of military force, to a more detailed and specific objective which included how, where and when military force should be employed to attain the objective of security, and thereby support the general aim of supporting the Afghan government. The way the political objective was designed by the end of the period was closely connected to the population centric approach which was and is characteristic of the ideas connected to classic counter-insurgency. Further, by 2007 the security objective was described in

⁴⁰⁶ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), .pp. 38-39

⁴⁰⁷ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," p. 14; Peter Teeuw, "The Dutch Approach in Uruzgan," in *Circular from the Dutch Army Liaison to the Norwegian Army*(Oslo: Dutch Army, 2007).

⁴⁰⁸ *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, Para 8ii: *de wijze van optreden*.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

catch phrases from the classic counter-insurgency vocabulary such as ‘ink-spot’ and ‘hearts and minds’, but more interesting was the emphasis at the political level of the reciprocal connection between the security objective and other objectives, the willingness to prioritise the main populated areas and the willingness to accept that the insurgents were operating outside the ADZ and not let this interrupt the ongoing operations.⁴¹⁰

Governance

The second objective deriving from its political aim of assisting the Afghan government was to improve governance within Afghanistan, Baghlan and Uruzgan. The development of this objective followed a similar path to that of the security objective in that it was fairly general and unspecific at the early stages of the Netherlands’ contribution in Afghanistan and then became more specific as the Dutch commitment grew both in scope and complexity. As noted above, the Dutch political purposes and its political aim of assisting the Afghan government did not thoroughly develop the implications of establishing a state or the various alternatives of governance at the state level. By the beginning of the period, the Dutch government discussed the objective of improving governance in general and unspecific terms, reflecting the limited attention that Afghanistan had in late 2003.⁴¹¹ Its attention was very much on its deployment in Iraq, where its views of governance in the years of 2003 and 2004 was that of not getting directly involved in the provincial and local governance, but rather to focus on general military security and allow the central authorities to deal with the improvement of governance.⁴¹²

The somewhat general and unspecific view of the objective was also visible in the 2004 to 2006 deployment of the PRT Baghlan, where the mission statement and the discussion on what governance meant in the province did not extend further than ‘...to increase the authority of the Afghan government and to minimise the causes of instability.’⁴¹³ The PRT, in turn, defined this as providing support to the development

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, para 4: De drie operatielijnen; See: *Ibid. Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, 2005, p. 10.

⁴¹¹ See: The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands, "Permanent Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence: The Deployment of Dutch Apache Helicopters to Afghanistan."

⁴¹² Zaalberg and Cate, "A Gentle Occupation", pp. 122 and 27.

⁴¹³ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan", p. 15.

of Afghan security forces, as well as reinforcing the existing local authorities.⁴¹⁴

Although the PRT did also establish a network of informal local leaders, and strived towards the maintenance of local popular support, the PRT did not appear to see this in order to play an active role in the shaping of local governance, but rather to maintain a good relationship with the population.⁴¹⁵

The deployment to Uruzgan, for which preparation started in 2005, changed the Dutch view of the political objective of improving governance. The Kabul and Baghlan missions did not seem to produce a detailed description of how the Dutch government envisaged improving the governance in its areas. By late 2005, the objective had become more specific and detailed, as the Dutch government saw the role of the Dutch Armed Forces as not limited to the buttressing of the existing power structures as in Baghlan. The Dutch Government argued that the objective of improving governance would entail influencing the local authorities towards developing ‘...a more representative local governance in Uruzgan.’⁴¹⁶ Coming on the heels of an assessment of the lopsided power structure between the various Pashto tribes in Uruzgan and how this created tension, this statement illustrated that the Dutch government intended to actively change the composition of the local Afghan government in 2006. The political objective of improving governance was thus interpreted by the Dutch government as including the altering of existing power structures. This interpretation of the political objective was tied to the reasoning that the disenfranchised tribes were often inclined to support the Taliban inside and outside the ADZs, and the inclusion of these tribes in the provincial and district government structure would reduce the Taliban’s possibilities to operate in the province.⁴¹⁷ The ambition of creating ‘a more representative’ local government was also linked to the issues of transparency and corruption, as the lopsided representation between the tribes was reflected in how much support and funds each tribe could expect to receive from its of provincial, district, and town governments.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴¹⁶ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 9.

⁴¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

⁴¹⁸ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), p. 53

The Dutch government's change in 2005 was also reflected in its ensuing actions. By March 2006 it had, as the British in Helmand, successfully lobbied for a change of the provincial governor on the grounds of a disproportional representation of the Popolzai tribe and the ensuing nepotism and corruption.⁴¹⁹ Although the Dutch government emphasised the importance of a transparent and representative government at a provincial and local level, it also maintained its emphasis on understanding and utilising the informal power structures.⁴²⁰ Accordingly, it built on its practical (although in the case of Iraq not governmental policy) experiences from its Iraq and Baghlan deployments, and nurtured its relationship with alternative power structures throughout the period by maintaining contacts with the former governor as well as working with local *shuras* inside and outside the Afghan official government. By 2007, the Dutch emphasis of balancing the formal and informal power had become an integral way of realising the political objective of governance. Whereas in 2003 the Dutch government had deployed to Iraq with the explicit intention not to get involved in local governance, by 2007 the Dutch government saw the need in Afghanistan to get directly involved in the improvement of governance by influencing and directing, as well as accepting and utilising both the formal and informal structures in order to make headway in the province given the weaknesses of the centrally appointed authorities.⁴²¹

The Netherlands defined and realised its political objective differently than did the UK and Norway. The initial definition of the objective, derived from the aim of assisting the Afghan central authorities, was not substantially different from that of the two other countries; it did not analyse or discuss what governance meant in Afghanistan in relation to their use of military force. Indeed, if the experiences of the Dutch forces in Iraq from 2003 are an indication, the Dutch government saw the objective of governance in a very passive and reluctant manner, and did not see a practical relationship between the objectives of improving security and improving governance. This meant that at the beginning of the period there were similarities between the Dutch and Norwegian understanding of improving governance. These similarities were harder to find towards the end of the period. Through its experiences in Iraq, Baghlan and in Uruzgan, the Dutch government defined its objective of

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁴²¹ *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, para: *De Nederlandse bijdrage in Uruzgan sinds 1 augustus 2006: Bestuur*.

improving governance as meaning an active engagement with all ethnic communities, and influencing the actual provincial and district government in order to achieve its security and developmental objectives. The Norwegian government did not want to influence the provincial and district governments and were not willing to put sufficient pressure on the appointed administration to include the disenfranchised Pashto population, although this was described by its military as the main problem in the province.⁴²² In contrast, the Dutch government saw the need to pressure its provincial and district governments and were even instrumental in the removal of the provincial governor in order to encourage ‘....a more representative local governance in Uruzgan.’⁴²³

The Dutch understanding of the political objective of improved governance was closer to that of the British government’s, particularly from 2006 and onwards. Both governments saw the relationship between the objectives of security and improved governance, and thus pushed for new and less tainted provincial political leadership. Neither of the changes of provincial governors was particularly successful, as the change of governor in the Helmand province resulted in a total alteration of the British strategy in the autumn of 2006, and the Dutch had to find a new governor already by 2007.⁴²⁴ Despite the initial similarities and problems, the Dutch appeared to have a more engaging and pragmatic approach to the objective of governance. As its deployments in Afghanistan began in earnest in 2004, the Dutch government appeared to be aware at the political level of the local power dynamics in its provinces and defined its governance objective somewhat broader than did the UK. Whereas the UK were caught unawares by the request of Governor Daoud to leave the populated areas in Helmand in favour of the so-called ‘platoon-house strategy’ further North, the Dutch were able to get its new governor on its side in making the two initial ADZs (Deh Rahwood and Tarin Kowt) its priorities before expanding into the Chora district.⁴²⁵ In addition, the Dutch government appeared more willing to deal with the informal power structures in its two provinces. It maintained a complex relationship

⁴²² Solberg, "Development Gone Astray (*Bistand På Ville Veier*)."

⁴²³ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 9.

⁴²⁴ See General Richards in: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev. p. 53; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, para: *De Nederlandse bijdrage in Uruzgan sinds 1 augustus; Bestuur*.

⁴²⁵ *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*; *Ibid*.

with the deposed, yet still powerful, Jan Mohammad Khan, by never acknowledging his authority but always understanding his power and trying to make him engage in the process of improving security and the formal government.⁴²⁶ Furthermore, the Dutch appeared to have a more active and pragmatic approach of engaging the local leadership and the various ethnic and tribal communities. The British did engage the local tribal leaders, however, they appeared to be caught off guard or distanced themselves from the local power structures, as was the case in the locally negotiated truce at Musa Qalah in September 2006.⁴²⁷

Reconstruction

The third objective tied to the political aim of assisting the Afghan government was the objective of reconstruction (*wederopbouw*). The objective of reconstruction was an important element of the Dutch strategic behaviour throughout the period, although the emphasis and clarity of the objective was more pronounced towards the end of the period.

From 2001, Afghanistan had become one of the important recipients of Dutch humanitarian aid and development funds, and the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan was thus an important element of Dutch policy in the area.⁴²⁸ During the period of 2003 to 2005, reconstruction featured on the list of political aims and objectives provided by the Dutch government as guiding its policy and strategy in Afghanistan, but it was not elaborated upon in any detail. The deployment of its PRT to the Baghlan Province offers a case in point. The core of its mission was to increase the influence of the Afghan central government and to ‘...minimalise the causes of instability.’⁴²⁹ This meant that the PRT was to facilitate reconstruction through its security and governance efforts, but not necessarily get directly involved. Thus in its final report, the PRT gave more emphasis to the security and governance aspects of its mission than to reconstruction. The political objective of reconstruction was not directly linked to the security operations, but was seen as the domain of civilian organisations, with the Polad of the PRT acting as an intermediary between the civilian

⁴²⁶ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," p. 55.

⁴²⁷ ‘Gen Richards and Secretary of Defence Des Browne in: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.pp. 53 and 68.

⁴²⁸ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," p. 10.

⁴²⁹ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan ", p. 15.

and military actors.⁴³⁰ This separation between the civilian and military, and the reluctance to see reconstruction and development in relation to the ongoing security operations was, during the first years of period, quite similar to what became Norwegian strategic behaviour. It may well have been a result of the security situation in Baghlan, which was benign throughout 2004 to 2006, but a similar approach to the political objectives of security and reconstruction in a less benign area could be seen simultaneously in the Dutch AOR of the Al Mutannah province in Iraq between 2003 and 2004. In Al Mutannah, the Dutch government wanted a distinction between reconstruction efforts and the more general efforts to establish security in the province.⁴³¹ The distinction was upheld as a political objective to distance the Dutch troops from the role of an occupation force, but the underlying idea of separating the reconstruction from security was similar to that of the Baghlan PRT.

The similarities between the Dutch and Norwegian approaches to the political objective of reconstruction appeared to be limited to the years of 2003 through 2005, and only to the political intent, not the behaviour on the ground. Although the two governments shared the intent of not entangling troops in complicated civilian processes and local political games that were beyond their competency; in practice, the Dutch political objective of reconstruction was integrated with the objectives of security and governance to a much a larger degree. In Baghlan, the initial distinction between reconstruction and the other operations was not kept in practice, as the main focus of the reconstruction operations were security and governance enabling projects in addition to civilian infrastructure.⁴³² Furthermore, whereas the Norwegian government organised its PRT so as to keep the two objectives of security and reconstruction from interacting, the Dutch government organised its PRT in Baghlan (and Iraq) with political and development advisors with the task of co-ordinating military and civilian actors and their activities.⁴³³

During the process of deciding if and how the Netherlands should deploy to the Uruzgan province, the political objective of reconstruction developed and changed the strategic behaviour of the Netherlands. By the time the Dutch government

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴³¹ Zaalberg and Cate, "A Gentle Occupation", pp. 122-23.

⁴³² Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan ", p. 19.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*

presented the decision to deploy in December 2005 the political objective of reconstruction was given more emphasis than in the previous deployment in Baghlan, as the objective of reconstruction was ‘...one of the most important goals of the PRT.’⁴³⁴ Whilst the PRT in Baghlan was given a co-ordination task, the PRT in Uruzgan was given direct responsibility for reconstruction efforts in the province, ‘...as soon as possible.’⁴³⁵ The increased emphasis of the political objective of reconstruction and its direct impact on the Dutch strategy may be explained through various factors. The situation in Uruzgan was, in contrast to the Baghlan province, that by 2006 ‘...international and credible national NGOs [were] practically absent from the province.’⁴³⁶ Consequently, this change in the Dutch government’s approach to its political objective of reconstruction, where the Dutch PRT was to take a more direct and active part in reconstruction operations, was to some extent a necessity rather than a choice. Further, the emphasis on reconstruction prior to the Uruzgan deployment appeared to be somewhat driven by the Dutch government’s need to present the deployment as less belligerent and more peaceful *vis-a-vis* the political opposition and broader public opinion.⁴³⁷

However, the changes in the political objective of reconstruction cannot fully be explained by the two preceding factors. During the preparation to the Dutch deployment to Uruzgan the government changed the way reconstruction related to the two other objectives as well as the overall political aim and purposes. In other words, the Netherlands changed or at least clarified its strategy before the Uruzgan deployment. The reconstruction efforts were now closely linked to the two other objectives of improved governance and increased security, so much so that the Dutch official report after the mission argued that ‘...[t]he underlying thought is that security, good governance and development are inextricably linked.’⁴³⁸ In early 2006, the Dutch Foreign Minister argued that the Dutch response in Uruzgan was to be based on a

⁴³⁴ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 20.

⁴³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴³⁶ The Liaison Office, "The Dutch Engagement in Uruzgan 2006-2010: A Tlo Socio-Political Assement," (Kabul: The Liaison Office, 2010), p. 6.

⁴³⁷ Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," p. 270; George and de Graaf Dimitriu, Beatrice, "The Dutch Coin Approach: Three Years in Uruzgan, 2006-2009," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 21, no. 3 (2010): p. 432.

⁴³⁸ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), p. 19

‘...trinity of politics, security and development.’⁴³⁹ This use of Clausewitzian logic was intended and desired as the Clausewitzian theoretical concept provided the degree of integration between the three objectives that was necessary to realise the aim of assisting the Afghan government. This integrated understanding of the relationship between reconstruction (the Foreign Minister used ‘reconstruction’ and ‘development’ interchangeably through his speech), governance and politics, and security, was tied to the overall political purposes of the Netherlands’ participation in NATO’s operations; the realist purpose of rooting out international terrorists and the more ideal purpose of international peace and security, could both be realised through a proper understanding of the trinity of governance, security and reconstruction.⁴⁴⁰ The objective of reconstruction was not only given more emphasis, but was also seen as an instrument to support the overall political aims and purposes as evident in Foreign Minister Bot’s statement:

*Where we are trying to win over the population for a more peaceful and stable order, our developmental instruments should support and be seen to support the overall effort.*⁴⁴¹

The trinity of politics, security and development was reflected in the corresponding Foreign Office doctrine of Diplomacy, Defence and Development, or the 3D-approach. This doctrine, which became the mantra of Dutch policy from late 2006 and onwards, continued the argument that ‘...military, diplomatic and developmental efforts need to be integrated as much as possible to achieve the ultimate goal: the strengthening of local institutional capacity.’⁴⁴² In contrast to the approach of Norway, the Netherlands changed and developed its strategy from late 2005 and early 2006, and thus its objective of reconstruction, in the direction of a population centric counter-insurgency strategy. The reconstruction effort was to support the overall aim of assisting the Afghan government, and to be integrated, and support the actual security operations as well as the efforts to improve governance. Whether the political levels of government understood that their reasoning about the relationship between reconstruction and other objectives amounted to a classic version of population centric counter-insurgency is debated, but the political reasoning (regardless of its military theoretical origins) laid the political foundation for operations where reconstruction

⁴³⁹ Bot, "The Dutch Approach: Preserving the Trinity of Politics, Security and Development " p. 2.

⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁴⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴⁴² Robbert Gabriëls, "A 3d Approach to Security and Development," *The Quarterly Journal* 2007, no. Summer (2007): p. 68.

was to be integrated with military force and with the explicit intent of separating the Taliban and other insurgents from the broader population in Uruzgan.⁴⁴³

This view of the political objective of reconstruction and its integrated relationship with security and governance also required an integrated organisation. The Norwegian Model necessitated a separation of the reconstruction and security organisations since the civilian and military actors were to have 'daylight' between themselves from the ministries in Oslo down to the dust in the Faryab province, however, the Dutch organisation developed along diametrically opposite lines. The operations in Iraq and Baghlan had already shown that the Dutch use of integrated civilian advisors had been successful in taking on local political responsibilities and co-ordinating civilian and military efforts.⁴⁴⁴ The missions in Iraq and in Baghlan revealed the benefits of inter-ministerial co-operation throughout the chains of command, but also revealed the problems that could arise when there was insufficient co-operation or integration in the planning and operational stages of a deployment. In Baghlan the integration between the different ministries involved was insufficient in order to make headway in the areas of reconstruction and development. The PRT-deployment to Baghlan led by the Netherlands' MoD created problems in developing joint military and civilian assessments prior to deployment, and in bringing in experts from civilian NGOs and businesses, as well as required expertise from other ministries.⁴⁴⁵

The Dutch view of the political objective of reconstruction became a lot more emphasised after 2006, but also more aligned with the other objectives supporting the aim of assisting the Afghan government. By adopting this view, the reconstruction efforts contributed to the direction of the security operations and appeared to create less confrontation between the needs of security operations, improved governance operations, and reconstruction efforts. In Helmand the lack of mutual understanding between security operations and reconstruction and governance efforts surfaced during late 2006 and early 2007 in the form of the question of whether the QIPs were desirable, and more importantly where the funding should come from.⁴⁴⁶ The Dutch

⁴⁴³ See: Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, "Hearts and Minds or Search and Destroy: The Teachings of Classic Counterinsurgency " *Militaire Spectator* 176, no. no 7/8, 2007 (2007): p. 299.

⁴⁴⁴ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan ," p. 39, para: *wederopbouw*; Zaalberg and Cate, "A Gentle Occupation", p. 127.

⁴⁴⁵ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan ", p. 22.

⁴⁴⁶ See: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev. p. 30.

interpretation of the same problem created less conflict as the chosen understanding of reconstruction and development allowed for these projects, on the conditions that they were either in line with the overall development scheme within the ADZ, or quick because they were outside the ADZs.⁴⁴⁷ This approach to reconstruction and development and the corresponding objectives, also prepared the ground for a more integrated organisation and operations than were the case in the UK and Norway. The Netherlands' political objective of reconstruction during the period between 2003 and 2008 therefore developed from an objective that was of great importance but not seen as integrated in the Dutch strategy, to an objective that became integrated fully in a population centric counter-insurgency strategy.

Other aims and objectives: Counter-narcotics

The Dutch view of counter-narcotics represented a middle position between the two other states. Counter-narcotics was from the outset seen as an underlying socio-economic problem, but in accordance with the general direction from ISAF, the Dutch government initially did not see this as an objective which should directly guide the use of force.⁴⁴⁸ This understanding of the problem apparently led the Dutch government to see counter-narcotics as a subordinate objective, not a separate and independent aim as the British did, but an objective related to the objectives of security, governance and reconstruction and limited by the ISAF mandate.⁴⁴⁹

The counter-narcotics objective was initially seen in relation to the efforts in the fields of improving governance. The Dutch government was aware of the impact that the production and trade of opium had on the political scene in both Baghlan and Uruzgan provinces, and the provincial and local authorities' involvement in the trade, as well as the ensuing corruption in all levels of government.⁴⁵⁰ Throughout the period, the Dutch efforts in improved governance were directed towards ameliorating the impact of the drugs trade on local and provincial government. The Dutch efforts both

⁴⁴⁷ B.R. Bot, H.G.J. Kamp, and A.M.A. Ardenne-Van der Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation 20 October," (The Hague: The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands, 2006), para: *Cimic en wederopbouw*; Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," p. 16; The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," pp. 64-65.

⁴⁴⁸ Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004 " p. 12.

⁴⁴⁹ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, pp. 8 and 20.

⁴⁵⁰ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan", pp. 6-7.

in Baghlan and Uruzgan were directed at improving the judiciary and the police efforts, as well as throughout the period emphasising the importance of supporting the government through information operations in support of the Afghan drugs operations.⁴⁵¹

In addition to seeing the narcotics trade as an underlying socio-economic factor and related to governance, the narcotics situation influenced the security operations. The Dutch government realised early on that the dilemma was that the Dutch PRT's success in enhancing stability depended on '....good relations with the local populace....', and a good relationship was not forthcoming if ISAF went too far in its counter-narcotics strategy.⁴⁵² On the other hand, the drugs trade was seen as an important source of funding to the Taliban, to general instability and to criminal and informal structures working counter to the Dutch security operations.⁴⁵³ As a solution to this, Dutch forces were initially to provide general support to the counter-narcotics operations of the Afghan authorities in their efforts to eradicate the substantial opium production in Uruzgan. As Dutch troops had '... no authority...' to carry out '....independent actions against the drug producers', the support of the security forces were limited to general training, logistics, and public awareness in its province.⁴⁵⁴ This statement of 2005 was modified by 2007, when the Balkenende-IV government changed their stance. The initial support from Dutch troops to the direct counter-narcotics operations was withdrawn, and Dutch troops were to avoid any involvement in direct counter-narcotics operations such as the eradication of opium fields.⁴⁵⁵ The Dutch understanding of its counter-narcotics operations therefore had the same trajectory as its British counterparts, although from a more inauspicious starting point.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18; The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," p. 62.

⁴⁵² Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004 " p. 13.

⁴⁵³ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," p. 22; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, p. 12, para: *Drugsbestrijding*.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*; *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, 2005, p. 20.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ibid.* *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, para: *Drugsbestrijding*.

2) Were the Political Purposes and Aims Adapted to the Nature of War, the Character of Complex Conflicts and Coalition Warfare?

After the examination of the Netherlands' political intent, the next step in this study is to analyse how these political purposes, aims and objectives were adapted to the nature of war in general, and to complex conflicts and coalition warfare specifically.

The Netherlands' main political purposes, aims, and objectives may be illustrated in this manner:

Overall Dutch purpose:	International Peace and Security	Counter-terrorism
	Coalition aims and objectives	Dutch aims and objectives
Political aims of a higher order	Assisting the Afghan state	No independent aims
Political objectives of a lower order	Security	
	Improved governance	
	Reconstruction	
Related objective	Counter-narcotics	

Adapted to the nature of war: Instrumentality?

The first question of adaptability relates to whether the political purposes, aims and objectives were instrumental in relation to strategy, i.e. whether they were clear enough to provide direction for the use of Dutch force. The strategic logic of the Netherlands was that the two purposes of counter-terrorism and contributing to international peace and security were to be realised through the aim of establishing an

Afghan central state. This aim was in turn to be realised through the objectives of creating a secure environment, improving governance, and socio-economic reconstruction, as well as supporting the Afghan efforts to reduce the narcotics economy. This logic, just as in the two other states, was rarely described fully and even more rarely discussed. Just as in the cases of Norway and the UK, the government of the Netherlands did not discuss alternative ways to realise its two purposes. The governments of the period also struggled to reconcile the objectives of reconstruction and security. Nevertheless, whilst the Dutch political intent did not provide an unambiguous strategic logic as to what was to be done, it did gradually provide more direction as to how Dutch force was to achieve the political intent than did the two other states.

The dual purposes of counter-terrorism and international peace and security could from the outset appear somewhat contradictory given that the explicit intent behind the OEF was to conduct anti-terrorist operations within Afghanistan combined with the Dutch refusal to actively participate in OEF until 2005. However, unlike their Norwegian counterparts, the Dutch governments discussed in detail the relationship between the two purposes, resulting in clear direction as to what the relationship between Dutch forces and OEF forces should be, the limits of co-operation, as well as the legal foundation for the Dutch participation in counter-terrorism and ISAF's security operations. The reason for the discussion on the relationship and the clear limitations was not only because the governments recognised the need to discuss and clarify areas of conflict between the two purposes, but also because the three governments were in a precarious parliamentary situation where they had to clarify and bargain with internal opposition within the coalition governments as well as a critical opposition in the Second Chamber.⁴⁵⁶ Hence, despite the apparent contradiction between the two purposes, there did not appear to be a great problem of reconciling the two issues in practice during the period.

The strategic logic of the Dutch government was not clearer or better communicated than the other two states, but the political debate forced the three governments to iron out any contradictions between the purposes, aims and objectives

⁴⁵⁶ Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," pp. 256-60; The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands, "Parliamentary Proceedings on Foreign Affairs."; Zaalberg and Cate, "A Gentle Occupation", p. 119.

earlier than in Norway and the UK because of the constant political pressure put on the governments. The strategic logic of the Dutch governments received its share of criticism, particularly the perceived lack of a strategic narrative.⁴⁵⁷ As noted above, by the time the renewal of the Uruzgan deployment was to be discussed in 2007, the Balkenende-IV government did not continue the clear emphasis of the purpose of denying a terrorist safe haven, but chose instead to focus on the purpose of international peace and security. The lack of a strategic narrative appeared not to be particularly pressing during the first two years of the Dutch participation in NATO's operations, but the problems arose before and during the Netherlands's deployment to Uruzgan. The main problem was the question of whether the Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) was a security force or a reconstruction force and the relationship between the objectives of security and reconstruction.⁴⁵⁸

In its preliminary arguments, the government was quite clear that there were large areas of Uruzgan where the OMF enjoyed support rather than the Afghan authorities or the OEF, and that the security situation in the future Dutch deployment area had deteriorated severely during 2005.⁴⁵⁹ Furthermore it made clear that there were parts of Southern Afghanistan '...where reconstruction is impossible due to the security situation.'⁴⁶⁰ The Balkenende-II government was thus '...conscious of the great risks of the mission...' and nowhere in its initial statements was the reader left with the impression that the Dutch forces would not meet opposition as it entered Uruzgan.⁴⁶¹ However, after facing parliamentary and public opposition between December 2005 and February 2006, the Balkenende-II government started emphasising the reconstruction aspects of the mission more than its initial assessments actually warranted.⁴⁶² Viewed from the side-line, given the context and the preceding as well as the subsequent communication, the criticism of the Dutch government was too harsh. The initial governmental analysis did not overly emphasise the peaceful reconstruction aspects of the deployment, and the subsequent communication emphasised the Dutch

⁴⁵⁷ Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," p. 271; See: Sven Biscop, "Afghanistan: Where Is the Strategic Debate?," *Internationale Spectator* 62, no. 11, November (2008).

⁴⁵⁸ Dimitriu, "The Dutch Coin Approach: Three Years in Uruzgan, 2006-2009," p. 432; Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," pp. 269 and 71.

⁴⁵⁹ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 11.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴⁶² "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," p. 269.

concept of balancing security and reconstruction operations depending on the local security situation. By late 2006 the Balkenende-III government emphasised that progress in the field of reconstruction was dependent on the security situation, and the security situation was only marginally better as the TFU and the PRT was strained by October 2006.⁴⁶³ Furthermore, even in its public relations pamphlet the Dutch Ministry of Foreign affairs explained the relationship and integration between reconstruction and security operations through the slogan: 'as military as necessary— as civilian as possible'.⁴⁶⁴

As noted earlier, the strategic logic and narrative was not expressly clear throughout the period, but the lack of clarity had more to do with the Dutch governments' presentation of its political purposes rather than substantive issues.⁴⁶⁵ The political purposes, aims and objectives were presented consistently through the period with no abrupt changes despite the three changes of governments. The strategic logic was not complete as it left the question of the links between purposes and the main aim unexplored, and it was not always communicated clearly, creating the outcry for a strategic narrative. The case of the Netherlands' political intent was thus riddled with the same problems as those of the UK and Norway, although to a lesser degree as Norway never resolved the inconsistencies between its purposes and the UK only managed to establish and communicate a consistent strategic logic later in the period.

In order to provide instrumentality, the political intent must be clear as to what to do, but equally important it must describe how it is to be realised through force. It is precisely here that the case of the Netherlands' political intent was markedly different from that of the two other states. Between 2003 and 2005, although the purposes and the general dilemmas stemming from them were discussed, the Dutch political aims and objectives were of a general nature and did not delve into the practicalities and details of the use of force. The ISAF detachments to KNMB as well as the PRT in Baghlan were provided general tasks such as '[c]reate circumstances and conditions that will improve the stability....' and increase the authority of the Afghan authorities as well as '....minimalise the causes of instability.'⁴⁶⁶ This mission statement was of course

⁴⁶³ Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation 20 October," paras: *Civic en wederopbouw and Tussentijdse analyse*.

⁴⁶⁴ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," pp. 3, 14 and 20.

⁴⁶⁵ Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," p. 271.

⁴⁶⁶ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan", p. 15.

an intent, but this intent was not followed up by more detailed instructions that would make the development of a strategy easy. Just as in the Norwegian government papers, the early Dutch political aims and objectives did not explore elements essential to strategy; namely the use of force in relation to time and space. In its initial statement, the Dutch government provided its PRT with ambiguous directions that said that the PRT could approach its objectives in ‘...various manners...’ such as to stay in contact with the local government and the local population and ‘...to gain good insight in local conditions...’ in order to improve stability and prevent inter-militia strife.⁴⁶⁷ There were no directions as to what factions that should be made a priority, or in what end of the province to begin. This lack of detail of course reflected the uncertainty and the novelty of the PRT concept, and the fact that the PRT in Baghlan represented the first independent Dutch command outside the confines of the KMNB in Kabul. It also reflected the limited resources provided to the PRT, as it was limited to 150 personnel. On the other hand the lack of resources was used precisely as a reason for providing detailed direction and priorities.⁴⁶⁸ The general approach to the Baghlan mission also mirrored the approach of the Dutch government in its operations in Iraq during the same period. In its deployment to Iraq, the Dutch government relied on its peacekeeping experiences of the 1990s and provided the contingent with similarly general guidelines of ‘...creat[ing] a safe and secure environment...’.⁴⁶⁹

Up until 2005 the level of detailed direction did not set the Netherlands apart from Norway or the UK. This seemed to change in 2005 as the Netherlands tried to decide whether or not to deploy to Southern Afghanistan and the Uruzgan province, and during this process the level of detailed direction increased significantly. First of all the statement to the Second Chamber in late 2005 gave an overall direction as to how the use of force should be used to increase the influence of the Afghan authorities. The starting point of the directions to the use of military force was that if the Dutch Task Force was to be successful ‘...it is important to win the support of the population...’⁴⁷⁰ This meant that the realisation of the main political aim was linked to a specific military doctrine with clear implications outlined in the Dutch military doctrine issued

⁴⁶⁷ Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004 " pp. 7-8.

⁴⁶⁸ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 15.

⁴⁶⁹ Zaalberg and Cate, "A Gentle Occupation", pp. 123-24.

⁴⁷⁰ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 14. para: *Wijze van optreden*.

three years earlier, which stated ‘...the **support of the civilian population** for the insurgents tends to be the centre of gravity.’⁴⁷¹ The significant aspect of this direction of the use of force was not that it was a novel move, as it simply placed the Dutch approach of 2005 squarely in classic counter-insurgency theory, but rather that it actually communicated a political choice of how to employ military force. This choice was in line with the preferred military doctrine. In this regard, a comparison with the other two states is interesting. In Norway no clear choice was provided at the political level during the period with respect to how the military force should be employed. In the UK a similar choice was chosen as the preferred operational method in 2005, but not clearly communicated at the political level until 2007. The Dutch direction of the 2005-statement was followed up by intermittent government communication between 2006 to 2008, but with the emphasis on the use of force in order to gain the support of the people and thereby create support for the Afghan authorities was preserved as the Balkenende-IV government presented its case for a renewal of the Uruzgan mission in November 2007.⁴⁷²

Secondly, the 2005 statement provided direction from the political level as to the time and space of the use of force. The statement argued that the Dutch forces would not be able to take over the four bases of the OEF in Uruzgan, but instead would have to focus on the two main bases of Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod.⁴⁷³ This meant that priority was given to the two main population centres in the province, both situated in the Southern part of the province, and only if the security situation ‘...developed in a favourable direction....’ would Dutch operations ‘...expand in a Northerly direction.’⁴⁷⁴ The decision to make the two population centres a priority rather than spreading out was made after the government considered the number of troops that was to be deployed in relation to the size of the province. Although the decision was not made along the lines of explicit classic counter-insurgency theory, in which the aim is to secure large population centres first, the political statement gave direction to the use of force by explicitly giving priorities as to where and when force should be directed. This operational concept was more consistently communicated

⁴⁷¹ Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, p. 577 (emphasis in original).

⁴⁷² *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, para: *de wijze van optreden*.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid*; *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, 2005, p. 15.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

than the population centric aim and by 2006 the concept of gradually expanding from the main centres was established in government communication and was described as an 'ink-blot concept' or strategy.⁴⁷⁵ The concept of the 'ink-blot strategy' was used throughout the Balkenende-IV government's statement on the renewal of the mission in 2007, which provided detailed descriptions on how the ADZ's and inkspots of Deh Rawood and Tarin Kowt had been created and how the district of Chora was to be linked up to one of the existing inkblots. By 2007, the detailed explanation as to how force was to be directed included the reasoning that '[t]hus, a significant part of the population (about 50%) of Uruzgan will be reached.'⁴⁷⁶

After providing only general direction to the use of force during its first two years under NATO command, the Dutch government provided significantly clearer guidance for its use of force between 2005 and 2008. The government adopted two key military concepts from classic counter-insurgency theory and practice; aiming to win over the population in order to reduce insurgent support, commencing with the most populous areas and not chasing the insurgents outside these areas.⁴⁷⁷ These two ideas were central tenets of classic counter-insurgency, but the Dutch governments did not themselves use the phrase counter-insurgency, or at least not 'consciously', as argued by Thijs Brocades-Zaalberg.⁴⁷⁸ Indeed, successive Dutch governments went to great lengths to avoid the term counter-insurgency, while paradoxically, employing its logic more conscientiously than most other Western governments.⁴⁷⁹ Regardless of the choice of terminology, compared to the two other states, the Dutch political objectives of security, governance, and reconstruction provided clearer and more detailed direction for the use of force, particularly during the last four years of the period.

The UK did not produce similarly detailed political objectives until 2007 and Norway never managed to produce detailed direction for its use of force between 2003

⁴⁷⁵ See: Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," p. 14; Teeuw, "The Dutch Approach in Uruzgan."

⁴⁷⁶ *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, para: *de wijze van optreden*.

⁴⁷⁷ See for example the Briggs plan in: A.J. Stockwell, ed. *Malaya - Part II the Communist Insurrection 1948-1953*, vol. Series B Volume 3, British Documents on the End of Empire (London: Institute of Commonwealth Studies in the University of London, 1995), pp.216-17.

⁴⁷⁸ Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, "To Coin or Not to Coin," *Militaire Spectator* 177, no. 3, 2008 (2008): p. 120; "Hearts and Minds or Search and Destroy: The Teachings of Classic Counterinsurgency", p. 299.

⁴⁷⁹ Dimitriu, "The Dutch Coin Approach: Three Years in Uruzgan, 2006-2009," p. 432.

and 2008. This Dutch clarity pertaining to the actual use of force thus stood in stark contrast to the lack of clarity in communication to the opposition and the broader public in the Netherlands. The two last Dutch governments of the period struggled to communicate the strategy to the opposition and to the broader public because of the widespread opposition to the Afghanistan mission. What was a clear counter-insurgency strategy by 2007 was not necessarily easy too communicate to the broader public or elements of the opposition and led to a confused debate about what type of mission the Dutch deployment really was. This brings up the question of whether the Dutch governments' political objectives were almost too instrumental, detailed and clear in relation to the use of force and adopted too much military terminology given the domestic political situation between 2005 and 2008.

Adapted to the nature of war: Unpredictability and reciprocity in strategy?

Instrumentality is a vital element of strategy; the political intent must be translated into clear directives as to how the use of force is to realise the political ambitions. On the other hand, the use of force is to realise the political purposes, aims and objectives under the uncertain and unpredictable conditions of war. The instrumental element of strategy must be adapted to these conditions, or in other words to the nature of war. Strategy must take its initial direction from the political intent, but in the face of the uncertainty and unpredictability of war, the political intent must be prepared to be adjusted and adapted. This view of the strategy, whereby the process of strategy is more complicated than a simple instrumental ends and means relationship between political intent and the use of force, calls for a reciprocal process of strategy. This reciprocal process demands that the original political intent, or the participation in the conflict, must be adapted to the changing circumstances of war as the actual operations unfold.

The greatest source of uncertainty and unpredictability in conflict, and thus strategy, is the fact that strategy must be developed with the presence of a living adversary or enemy in mind. The initial Dutch strategic behaviour, when it came to the question of adapting to the nature of war, was unspecific and quite general. Similarly to the Norwegian and British governments, the Dutch government during the years of 2003 and 2004 did not specifically relate its deployments of troops to the actual conduct of an adversary. To its credit, in 2004 the Dutch government went further than

its Norwegian and British counterparts in its discussion on the Baghlan deployment in June 2004 where it discussed the actual content of the term OMF and the activities of the groups.⁴⁸⁰ However, the Netherlands' government did not relate this directly to the mission statement or the actual tasks of the PRT, sticking instead to general terms such as '....increasing stability...' and '....minimizing the sources of instability', without relating the tasks to an actual living adversary who might react and counter the initial move.⁴⁸¹ This more general and somewhat unspecific approach *vis-a-vis* the adversaries could be explained by the small size of the PRT and its limited abilities, as well as the limited influence of the Taliban in the North as early as 2004.⁴⁸² On the other hand, the government itself painted a picture of a resurgent and active Taliban and other insurgent groups in the Baghlan province in 2004, although the province was somewhat sheltered from the influence of the South.⁴⁸³ By 2004, the Dutch government did not relate its political purpose and aims and its use of force to an adversary that could thwart its plans.

This general approach of 2003 to 2004 did not differ significantly from the other two states. The British government gradually developed its political purpose and aims to take the Taliban into account, whereas the Norwegian government in fact never made any reference to an adversary confronting it. The process of developing the Dutch deployment to Uruzgan instigated a change. When the 2005 decision (or intent) to deploy Dutch forces to Uruzgan was communicated to the Second Chamber, the Balkenende-II government dealt with its adversaries in much greater detail and related its adversaries to its political aims and use of force. In December 2005, after almost 10 months of deliberations, the Dutch government emphasised that Uruzgan was a province where the Taliban had strong support both historically and currently, and where the Taliban and other groups operated frequently.⁴⁸⁴ Uruzgan was a province with '....strong ties to the Taliban,...', and that the Taliban and other groups had '....extensive freedom of action...' in large parts of the province as of late 2005.⁴⁸⁵ It also made the analysis that this freedom of action was tied to the support from the

⁴⁸⁰ Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004 " p. 10.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7; Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan", p. 15.

⁴⁸² Giustozzi, *Koran, Kalashnikov and Laptop: The Neo-Taliban Insurgency in Afghanistan*, pp. 61ff.

⁴⁸³ Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004 " p. 10.

⁴⁸⁴ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 5.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

traditionally conservative and marginalised tribes. By 2005 the Dutch government gave a lot of attention to its adversaries, but more importantly it then linked this analysis to its political aims and objectives. Whereas in 2004 its analysis was thorough but not related to its actual mission and operations, the main aim of the Dutch forces was to: ‘...increase the support from the local population for the Afghan authorities, and reduce the support for the Taliban and affiliated groups.’⁴⁸⁶ This meant that the aims of the 2006 TFU were directly tied to a physical adversary. The 2005 statement did not follow up directly by directing security, government and reconstruction operations directly in relation to the adversary, but from the mission statement followed that not all parts of the Dutch strategy could be decided in The Hague in 2005, some of its strategy would have to be adapted to the actions of its adversaries. This was in turn related to the strategy of gradual enlargement of the ADZs through the so-called ‘ink-blot’ strategy.

This picture, of a gradually increasing awareness of its physical adversaries’ impact on Dutch strategy continued after the deployment of the TFU in August 2006. The 2005 process laid the foundation for classic counter-insurgency strategy, and this was continued as the mandate for the TFU was to be renewed in 2008. In October 2007, the Balkenende-IV government argued for the continuation of the TFU and appeared to develop a tighter relationship between its strategy and its adversaries. The adversaries, mainly Taliban and affiliated groups, were described as having intensified their small scale operations as a result of the Dutch and Australian operations in Uruzgan, and the groups were intensifying these operations in an attempt to maintain their hold on the population.⁴⁸⁷ Elements of the Taliban were also seen as engaging in a political battle throughout the province by only targeting international forces and refraining from engaging the troops of Hamid Karzai.⁴⁸⁸ The political aims for the use of force were then specified not only with an enemy in mind, but also in light of the enemy intent and *modus operandi*. The Dutch strategy continued the effort of enlarging its two main ADZs in the South of Uruzgan before linking them up with a third ADZ in the Chora district further north and subsequently linking all three ADZs. Given the analysis of the enemy, the immediate aim of the Dutch forces ‘...was not primarily to

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid*; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, p. 13. Para: *veiligheid*.

⁴⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

defeat the Taliban militarily...’, since it was proving difficult to engage the Taliban in large scale engagements but rather to ‘....make the Taliban irrelevant.’⁴⁸⁹ This was to be done indirectly by out-governing the Taliban in the ADZs as well as directly by disrupting the Taliban’s command structure, logistics, and lines of communication. In addition the leadership was to be targeted, ‘....where possible through the means of reconciliation....’⁴⁹⁰

By the end of the period the Dutch governments were thus designing their strategy according to a classic counter-insurgency model, and simultaneously developing this strategy with the uncertainty of a living adversary in mind. The actual discussions and analysis at the political level was not extremely sophisticated, but compared to the other two states the Dutch political aims took account of the fact that there was an adversary that could affect the state’s own plans sooner than did Norway and the UK. This leads into the more general aspect of reciprocity in the strategic process, and the question of whether the political purposes, aims and objectives were adapted to the changing conditions of the operations in Afghanistan during the period. The overall impression of the strategic behaviour is one of continuity as far as the political purposes behind its strategy, and a gradual development and adaptation of its aims and objectives as the operations in Afghanistan unfolded.

Whereas the overall purposes of the Netherlands were kept unchanged throughout the period and not adjusted to events on the ground, the Dutch political aims were. Another change came in the field of counter-narcotics in which the Dutch troops took on a passive role before 2005.⁴⁹¹ As the deployment was discussed in late 2005 the Dutch concept was altered to provide direct support to the Afghan eradication efforts in the form of training, logistical support and information campaigns. The Dutch troops were to support eradication efforts but stop short of actually carrying out the eradication.⁴⁹² Two years later and after 15 months in Uruzgan, the Dutch government changed its stance as a result of the experiences gained as well as a change in Afghan policy. Instead of actively supporting eradication, the Dutch government stated in October 2007 that it would no longer take part in the eradication efforts, and made no mention of providing support, but instead emphasised the

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹¹ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan", p. 17.

⁴⁹² *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 20.

development of alternative livelihoods through British support as well as continued information campaigns within the province.⁴⁹³ By 2008 the Dutch government had begun to find a way out of the dilemma it had identified as early as 2004; the problem of maintaining popular support while reducing the impact of the drugs trade through a combination of development schemes in order to develop alternative livelihoods, combined with emphasis on the judicial and government sectors to limit the networks, as well as a limited direct Dutch involvement in the counter-narcotics operations. Both the 2005 and the 2007 changes were choices made by the Dutch governments. The Norwegian governments chose to maintain a passive profile throughout the period, and the ISAF directives left the members of the coalition with a lot of interpretation on the issue of counter-narcotics.⁴⁹⁴ Based on the 2007 statement the reasons for the change of the political aim appeared to be that eradication created unrest with the rural population and added support to the Taliban.

The relationship between the aims of security, governance and reconstruction were also gradually adapted to developments on the ground. The main adaptation was that whereas the PRT in Baghlan was a straightforward advisory and assistance force, the TFU adopted a counter-insurgency approach to its assistance where the Dutch government became more directly involved in provincial governance. This development was based on the Dutch view that the provincial governance, unlike in Baghlan, was weak and unrepresentative, but also by the Dutch need to prioritise its resources. This change was brought on by the conditions on the ground, particularly the level of opposition that was expected and actually encountered, and the need for a more direct link particularly between the objectives of reconstruction and governance. This also resulted in organisational changes where the civilian element of TFU was substantially strengthened throughout the period. The PRT in Baghlan deployed with one POLAD (political adviser) and gradually introduced an OSAD (development advisor). The civilian component in TFU was enlarged and deployed with three civilian advisers, including an adviser on tribal relations, and as the operations unfolded this was further enlarged to twelve, with the senior POLAD taking charge of the Dutch PRT by 2008.⁴⁹⁵ This meant that the deployment was changed from a predominantly

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.* Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007, p. 20. Para: Drugsbestrijding.

⁴⁹⁴ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), p. 61

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 89 and 127.

military affair to include a sizeable civilian leadership. This organisational change reflected the inter-relationship between the objectives of security, governance, and reconstruction through the combination of the ADZs and the inkblot strategy, as well as the increased co-operation between the military and civilian elements in the execution of the Dutch strategy in Afghanistan.

This illustrated that the political aims and objectives were adapted to the conditions on the ground and that the relationship between the political intent and the means that were to realise them was indeed reciprocal. On the other hand, the Dutch deployment in Iraq between 2003 and 2005 went through the same process, only earlier. In Iraq the initial political aim of only dealing with the general security situation and not getting involved in the messy process of local governance or reconstruction was abandoned quite quickly by the troops on the ground. The political aim was then gradually changed, and the civilian element of the deployment was similarly increased.

⁴⁹⁶ The Dutch government in 2003 was able to adapt and change its political aims, but it appears that it did not catch on quickly enough that the situation in Uruzgan called for increased civil-military integration in Uruzgan two years later. Furthermore, despite running into heavy resistance during the enlargement of the ADZs northwards in 2007, there were no ideas about reinforcing the TFU and carrying out a surge in the newly established ADZ. Instead, the troops for the new ADZ were to be provided from the existing ones although the crucial Baluchi Valley which linked Chora to Deh Rawood had to be retaken several times, and the Deh Rawood ADZ experienced several setbacks.⁴⁹⁷ This can be explained by the fact that the strategy called for an expansion only after the initial ADZs were stable, but also because by 2007 the Dutch Land Forces were strained, and few reserves could be generated. The Dutch governments involved therefore did not appear to be fully prepared for possible setbacks that might have required additional forces.

This criticism aside, what was noteworthy about the Dutch political aims, compared to that of Norway in particular, but also to the UK, was how the political aims and objectives were developed and presented with military challenges in mind. The most important example of reciprocity in the Dutch strategic behaviour was

⁴⁹⁶ Zaalberg and Cate, "A Gentle Occupation", pp. 128-29.

⁴⁹⁷ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), p. 38

evident in the way the political aims were adapted to the conditions on the ground before and during the deployment to Uruzgan and the thoroughness with which the Dutch government went into detail about the conditions where they were to apply force. This thoroughness was not always the design of the Dutch government itself, as the challenges of maintaining a coalition government necessitated a step by step process of eliminating practical obstacles in the way of Dutch deployment to Uruzgan during the autumn of 2005, and the level of detail about the Dutch deployment present in the two statements of December 2005 and October 2007 were a result of the expected opposition in the Second Chamber.⁴⁹⁸ On the other hand, the three Dutch governments in charge of sending troops to Afghanistan used a similar framework (*Toetsingskader*) to outline the missions, a framework that went into detail about the local conditions, possible adversaries as well as the design of the military operations. This decision-making framework was in turn linked to a series of assessments of local conditions of the area in which force was to be used. Further, the Dutch government appeared more willing to integrate the military doctrines and concepts into their political intent and apply the existing Dutch military doctrine explicitly when it gradually developed a more detailed COIN strategy for its TFU. Although the three Dutch governments between 2003 and 2008 did not change the overall political purposes based on the changing character of the Afghanistan conflict, they constantly developed and adapted their aims and objectives in relation to the actual or anticipated conditions on the ground. Compared to Norway and the UK, which did not develop its political objectives with a similar attention to the actual conditions until the aftermath of the initial Helmand deployment in 2007, the level of adaptation to the actual conditions on the ground was striking.

Adapted to complex conflicts?

The final element of the analysis of the Dutch political intent and its adaptability is the question of whether their political purposes, aims and objectives were adapted to the peculiar character of complex conflicts and coalition warfare. The challenging aspect of making strategy in Afghanistan was that the conflict demonstrated several features of what has been described as complex or hybrid threats.⁴⁹⁹ The first challenge was the dichotomous character of the conflict which meant that the conflict

⁴⁹⁸ Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," pp. 256-60.

⁴⁹⁹ Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, p. 14.

exhibited varying levels of intensity and displayed features that were simultaneously modern and primitive. The second challenge was the drawn-out nature of contemporary conflicts, and finally that complex conflicts involve a multitude of different actors, both nationally and internationally. The challenges posed required a strategic behaviour that was able to understand and subsequently adapt to such conflicts.

The three governments of the Netherlands included in this study appeared to grasp the complex aspects of the conflict gradually as the Netherlands became more involved in the conflict, but also adapted its strategic behaviour to the problem somewhat earlier than the two other states. During the first two years of the period, there were few indications that the Dutch government understood the threat as a composite one. The deployments of the AH-64 wing to KMNB in 2004 and the PRT to Baghlan were done without a discussion of the nature of the threat that the Dutch forces would be up against. The threat was described as general low intensity threat from the OMF, spearheaded by the Taliban, but there was no description of how this threat could vary or how the threat would materialise.⁵⁰⁰ The process of deciding whether to deploy to the Uruzgan province again changed this. The statement in December 2005 described a direct and sizeable threat to the Dutch forces in Uruzgan and that the OMF and Taliban attacks had improved ‘....tactically and technically....’ as well as being ‘....better co-ordinated.’ The threats could range between ‘....attacks on patrols, supply lines, and the bases of Afghan and coalition security forces’ and intimidation of the local population and their leaders, as well as a political subversion campaign against the Afghan authorities.⁵⁰¹

This understanding of a composite threat was not immediately translated into the operational pattern in 2005, as the operational directions were of a general nature such as winning the support of the population as well as an emphasis on presence patrolling.⁵⁰² As the deployment unfolded from August 2006, however, the strategy and the ensuing operations clearly took into account the composite threat. The operations were designed to face the range of threats indicated in December 2005, as the Dutch

⁵⁰⁰ Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004 " p. 4.

⁵⁰¹ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 11, para: *Veiligheidsituatie en de OMF*.

⁵⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

forces first executed relatively low intensity security operations around the two main ADZs, before launching repeated high intensity operations against enemy strongholds in the Baluchi Valley and the Chora district in order to establish a third ADZ.⁵⁰³ This adaptation to the range of threats did not appear to come as a great surprise to the government or its armed forces. By the autumn of 2006, the Dutch government's slogan was 'as civilian as possible, as military as necessary', which was developed in 2007 to '....reconstruction where possible, military action where necessary.'⁵⁰⁴ The adaptation to the composite threat was also evident in the composition of the TFU. I have already pointed out the willingness to increase the civilian component after 2006, but in parallel the TFU illustrated its understanding of the high intensity aspects of the threat by deploying heavy artillery, mortars and AH 64s in Uruzgan from the outset, and were willing to use them, while simultaneously maintaining the emphasis on light foot patrols as the main element of its operations.⁵⁰⁵ Compared to the two other states, the Dutch governments appeared to gradually understand that the conflict in Afghanistan would present a composite threat and its strategic behaviour was adapted to this. This meant that where the British struggled to adapt an understanding of a composite threat at the political and strategic levels until 2007, the Dutch governments had laid the groundwork for such an adaptation as they began their involvement in stage three of NATO's enlargement operation. The Norwegian governments never appeared to come to grips with the range of threats in the Faryab province and did not adapt its strategy to the threats beyond general security policy statements, however, the Dutch governments were able to adapt its strategy between 2005 and 2008 to counter the actual threats facing its forces in Uruzgan.

The second aspect of the question of whether the political intent of the Netherlands was adapted to the challenges of making strategy in complex conflicts is the question of whether the political intent and strategy was adapted to the drawn out character of complex and contemporary conflicts. In addition to the composite threat of simultaneous high and low intensity action, contemporary conflicts are signified by their drawn out nature, and any strategy during the period would need to address this

⁵⁰³ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), .pp. 38-42

⁵⁰⁴ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," pp. 14 and 20; Gabriëlse, "A 3d Approach to Security and Development," p. 71; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, p. 5, para: *Kern van het besluit*.

⁵⁰⁵ Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation 20 October " p. 3. Para: Task Force Uruzgan.

issue.⁵⁰⁶ The case of the Netherlands between 2003 and 2008 in Afghanistan in many ways offered a double image. The actual strategy and operations were throughout the period designed with the emphasis on taking part in a long-term and drawn out conflict where progress and end results would be difficult to measure. Although the deployment of the PRT in Baghlan 2004 to 2006 did not discuss the issue, the Dutch government in its 2005 statement appeared to take into account that the Dutch use of force could only be seen in a long-term perspective. The Balkenende-II government adopted a modest and realistic approach to what it expected to achieve during its first deployment to Uruzgan. As noted earlier, the Dutch government was fully aware of the discrepancy between the size of the province and the number of troops it made available. Furthermore, the challenge of the political aim of assisting the Afghan government in extending its authority in the province was a long-term project, and ‘...it is not realistic to expect...’ that this aim would be completed in the two years of initial Dutch deployment or that the Afghans would not need further support after 2008.⁵⁰⁷ This understanding was confirmed during the renewal of the mandate for the deployment in 2007, when the new government argued that, although some progress had been made, the Afghan authorities would also still need outside support to govern after 2010.⁵⁰⁸

When designing its political aims and objectives, the Dutch governments were thus fully aware of the long-term nature of the tasks it had undertaken. The problem was that all three Balkenende governments of this study struggled to transform this awareness into a long-term political support for the Afghanistan mission. The initial decision to deploy to Uruzgan came after a prolonged parliamentary debate and discussion within the government. The mission was renewed only once in 2007 after yet another compromise where the government promised the opposition inside and outside the government that the mission would not go on beyond 2010.⁵⁰⁹ The debate on whether to prolong the mission led to the fall of the Balkenende-IV government in 2010, and the subsequent pullout of Dutch troops the same year. This meant that

⁵⁰⁶ Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, p. 29; USDOD, "Quadrennial Defense Review Report," p. A-3, JCS Chairman's Assessment; Smith, *The Utility of Force*, p. 292.

⁵⁰⁷ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 3 Para: *Haalbare resultaten*.

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.* Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007, pp. 7 and 17.

⁵⁰⁹ Mark Kranenburg and Derk Stokmans, "Will the Dutch Government Fall over Troop Deployment?," *NRC*, February 19 2010.

although the Dutch political aims and objectives described a strategic behaviour that made a long-term presence necessary, the actual political situation did not make such strategy realistic. The challenge for the Dutch governments was thus that although they understood the need for a prolonged commitment, the demands of the opposition and public opinion made such an understanding irrelevant. Compared to Norway and the UK, the Netherlands struggled to adapt its political intent to the requirements of the conflict; whereas the commitment to a general long-term presence in Afghanistan was not a challenge to either of the Norwegian and British governments, the Dutch governments struggled throughout the period to develop political aims that were compatible with the needs of a drawn-out complex conflict.

The third aspect pertaining to the relationship between complex conflicts and strategy is the question of whether the political purposes, aims and objectives of the Netherlands took into account the demands of contemporary and complex conflicts in relation to multi-functionality and multi-agency. Complex conflicts present an array of societal and wider security challenges which renders a one-dimensional military response an insufficient tool. Realising political aims and objectives in such a complicated environment requires a broad response of civilian and military political efforts and agencies that are able to cover a wide area of political, military and societal functions, as well as the ability to co-ordinate these efforts. The Afghanistan conflict during the period in question was a case in point. The aim of the Netherlands was not limited to the defeat of a military adversary, but rather to establish a centralised state with all the civilian efforts that such an aim entailed. The challenges were consequently not only of a military nature, but also a challenge to the Netherlands' ability to co-ordinate '...the full inventory of national instruments of power' in order to achieve its political aims and objectives of assisting the Afghan state through improving security, governance and reconstruction.⁵¹⁰

The political purposes, aims, and objectives of the Netherlands related differently to the issue of multi-agency and multi-functionality than did the two other states. The British approach had the close co-operation between all actors as its ambition but struggled until 2007 with the actual co-operation on the ground. The Norwegian political aims and objectives were designed to keep the different agencies

⁵¹⁰ Betz, "Redesigning Land Forces for Wars Amongst the People," p. 222.

separate in the theatre of operations and on the ground while still maintaining joint planning and evaluation. The Dutch approach to multi-functionality and multi-agency was characterised by an emphasis of the need for multi-functionality and multi-agency, combined with the willingness to use and co-ordinate various agencies during operations in Afghanistan.

The political aims and objective were not necessarily designed for multifunctional operations from the outset. During the Dutch deployments to Kabul and Baghlan, the emphasis on how to co-ordinate the various agencies of the Netherlands was not prevalent, partly because of the size of the missions, but also due to a lack of awareness and understanding of the challenges. The PRT in Baghlan did not see the aims of reconstruction and security as integrated in 2004, although the government stated that the reconstruction depended on the level of security.⁵¹¹ The mainly civilian task of reconstruction was initially not integrated with the more military tasks but co-ordinated through a POLAD, and although the PRT included a CIMIC detachment, the detachment was seen mainly as supporting other activities and severely limited by the lack of available CIMIC experts.⁵¹² A similar approach of not seeing the mainly civilian and military tasks of reconstruction and security as integrated was also visible during the Dutch deployment to the Al Muthanna province in Iraq in 2003 and 2004 where the Dutch troops were explicitly restricted from getting involved in governance and reconstruction efforts.⁵¹³ Although the Dutch approach during the first two years was akin to the Norwegian approach of not integrating the tasks, there were some important differences. Quite early in the Iraq deployment, the actual operations were developed to include the more civilian tasks of governance and reconstruction which made an increase in the number of civilian advisors and an increased integration necessary.⁵¹⁴

The main difference between the Dutch approach and the other two states' approaches to the question of complex conflict and multi-functionality became visible from late 2005. From 2005 the political aim of assisting the Afghan authorities in

⁵¹¹ Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004 " p. 8; Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Final Evaluation PRT Baghlan", p. 19.

⁵¹² Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004 ".

⁵¹³ Zaalberg and Cate, "A Gentle Occupation", pp. 122-23.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-29.

Uruzgan was understood as requiring both civilian and military agencies, and, crucially, these agencies would have to integrate, not only co-ordinate, their actions at the various levels of government; in the Hague, in Kabul, and most importantly on the ground in Uruzgan. This understanding fit with the ongoing development within the Dutch government of inter-ministerial co-operation and planning. Although there were conflicts between the MoD and the MFA during the Uruzgan planning process, these problems were not permanent obstacles to an integrated plan being developed, if anything the exchanges between the various agencies of the Dutch government produced more detailed understanding of the problems in Uruzgan and highlighted issues that needed to be addressed before a plan could be presented.⁵¹⁵ When the decision (or intent) was presented it was presented jointly by the three ministers involved, using the established framework. The Netherlands' view of responding to complex responses was further developed through 2006, and in April 2006 the Dutch Foreign Minister argued that:

*To address such a multidimensional set of issues, you require an integrated approach that makes full use of your political, developmental, economic, military, police and intelligence instruments.*⁵¹⁶

During this speech he made it clear that all Dutch security and reconstruction efforts would have to be integrated and adapted to an overall plan which was to win the support of the local population. The earlier separation of civilian and military tasks was thus abandoned and instead he made it clear that complex challenges were to be met by '...an *inseparable* trinity' of politics, security and development.⁵¹⁷ This understanding was then developed into the Dutch doctrine of the '3D approach to Security and Development' which was implemented in 2006 and 2007. As opposed to the two other states, by 2006 the Netherlands had its MFA and MoD arguing for inter-ministerial and inter-agency integration and explicitly warned against the risk of organisational stove piping which was so prevalent in the Norwegian approach to multi-functionality.⁵¹⁸

The co-operation between the various civilian and military agencies thus appeared to be less conflict ridden in the TFU than in the Norwegian area. An illustrative comparison of the approach to the co-ordination and integration of civilian and military agencies was that while the Norwegian government eventually pulled its

⁵¹⁵ Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," p. 258.

⁵¹⁶ Bot, "The Dutch Approach: Preserving the Trinity of Politics, Security and Development " p. 2.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6. Emphasis in original.

⁵¹⁸ Gabriëlse, "A 3d Approach to Security and Development," p. 72.

civilian advisers out of the Faryab province and stationed them in Kabul, the Netherlands appointed a civilian adviser as head of its PRT from 2008.⁵¹⁹ The Netherlands' political aims and objectives were thus well adapted to the challenges of multi-functionality and multi-agency that were evident in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008.

Adapted to coalition warfare?

The final question of the analysis of the political purposes, aims and objectives of the Netherlands is the question of how the country dealt with the challenges of making strategy within a coalition and as part of an alliance. The political purposes, aims and objectives of the Netherlands presented a composite image as far as coalition warfare was concerned. On the one hand, the Netherlands appeared to adapt its political intent well to coalition operations on the ground, however, it also had great difficulties in adapting its operations to the ongoing counterterrorism operations of the coalitions' largest contributor, the US led OEF. The question of how to align its political intent and develop its strategy *vis-a-vis* the OEF was a constant problem for the successive Balkenende governments because of the opposition within the coalition government itself, in the Second Chamber, as well as in the broader public. The challenges *vis-a-vis* the OEF stemmed from the understanding of Dutch political purpose of counterterrorism which was difficult to reconcile with the US when it came to the level of force used and the legal status of the combatants and terrorists. This meant that any co-operation with OEF created difficulties for all the three governments of this study, internally as well as externally. This led to practical challenges for the Dutch forces as ISAF and NATO relied on co-operation with the OEF forces between 2003 until late 2006, when the two operations were merged into one command. The Dutch governments spent much time and effort to clarify how the Dutch NATO troops should deal with OEF-forces when it came to matters such as detainees, transfer of authority and ensuring that co-operation was kept to a minimum.⁵²⁰ Early on it created a confusing situation as the Dutch joint fighter mission with Norway and Denmark in 2003 was operating with a different purpose when it came to providing air support to the OEF. The deployment of AH 64 helicopters to ISAF in February 2004 also suffered from challenges as the air support structure of

⁵¹⁹ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), pp. 33 and 127

⁵²⁰ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, pp. 13-15 and 19.

ISAF in 2004 relied heavily on support from the USAF who did not distinguish between the two operations when it came to airspace, training or actual operations. The challenges of coalition warfare were enhanced in November 2005 when the Second Chamber passed a motion (initiated by a member of a government coalition party) that instructed Dutch troops not to co-operate with countries in violation of international law, and the US' treatment of illegal combatants were seen as falling under this category.⁵²¹ This meant that Dutch troops could only provide support to OEF forces '...in emergency (*in extremis*) situations.'⁵²² Given the fact that OEF could operate in the province, this created a challenging situation for the troops, particularly since the Dutch government in 2005 relied on international support to reinforce the TFU. The Dutch interpretation of its combined purposes of counterterrorism and international peace and security thus created problems when Dutch use of force was to be aligned with other international forces in Afghanistan.

In comparison to the Norwegian government after 2005 the Netherlands, however, were transparent about its caveats and restrictions and tended to make these restrictions clear prior to deployments. This meant that although there were substantial challenges for the Netherlands in co-operating with other coalition and alliance members, the Dutch stance was clearly communicated before the actual deployments took place. Moreover, whereas the Dutch governments met challenges with squaring its political purposes with OEF and other US elements of the coalition, its co-operation with ISAF forces met few of the same challenges. The co-operation with its ISAF partners within Baghlan and Uruzgan was unproblematic. The Uruzgan operations were conducted with Australia as a partnering nation, a co-operation that included an integrated effort in the field of improving governance.⁵²³ The Australians were a part of the TFU and participated with Special Forces and a designated reconstruction unit. The co-operation went so smoothly that the Australian forces received Dutch funding to carry out reconstruction missions, which sometimes left the local population with the impression that the Dutch actually did less than the Australians.⁵²⁴ In addition, the Dutch forces on the ground were in practice able to co-operate with elements of the

⁵²¹ The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands (*Tweede Kamer*), "Parliamentary Proceedings on Foreign Affairs."

⁵²² The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), pp. 46-47

⁵²³ The Liaison Office, "The Dutch Engagement in Uruzgan 2006-2010: A Tlo Socio-Political Assement," p. 27.

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

OEF and ISAF, particularly Australian Special Forces, as they conducted operations outside the Dutch ADZs, and although some co-ordination issues were reported, the TFU in general were able to co-operate with these forces without serious problems.⁵²⁵ Compared to their British counterparts, this co-operation seemed to have been less problematic, partly due to the Dutch willingness to co-operate, but also because of the relative calm of Uruzgan compared to Helmand. The willingness to adapt to other partners within the coalition and the alliance was also seen in the Dutch efforts to draw on experience and expertise from other nations and agencies such as the use of British experts and the DEA in the turning around of the Dutch strategy of counter narcotics in 2007 and 2008. Hence, the British and Dutch methods appeared to be largely similar at the operational level, although the British forces experienced more problems as they tried to co-ordinate OEF operations within their own AOR. The main difference between Dutch and British strategic behaviour resided in their respective relationships to the Afghan authorities. The Netherlands were able to establish a working relationship with their newly appointed provincial governor and get the Afghan authorities on board in its counter-insurgency strategy with its emphasis on the main population centres, whereas the British were opposed by the provincial governor at a crucial stage in 2006.

The political purposes of the Netherlands were thus difficult to adapt to the complex array of coalition partners in Afghanistan, particularly in relation to the OEF, but its political aims and objectives were well communicated and consequently created less complications than what would otherwise have been the case.

3) The Organisation of the Strategic Process

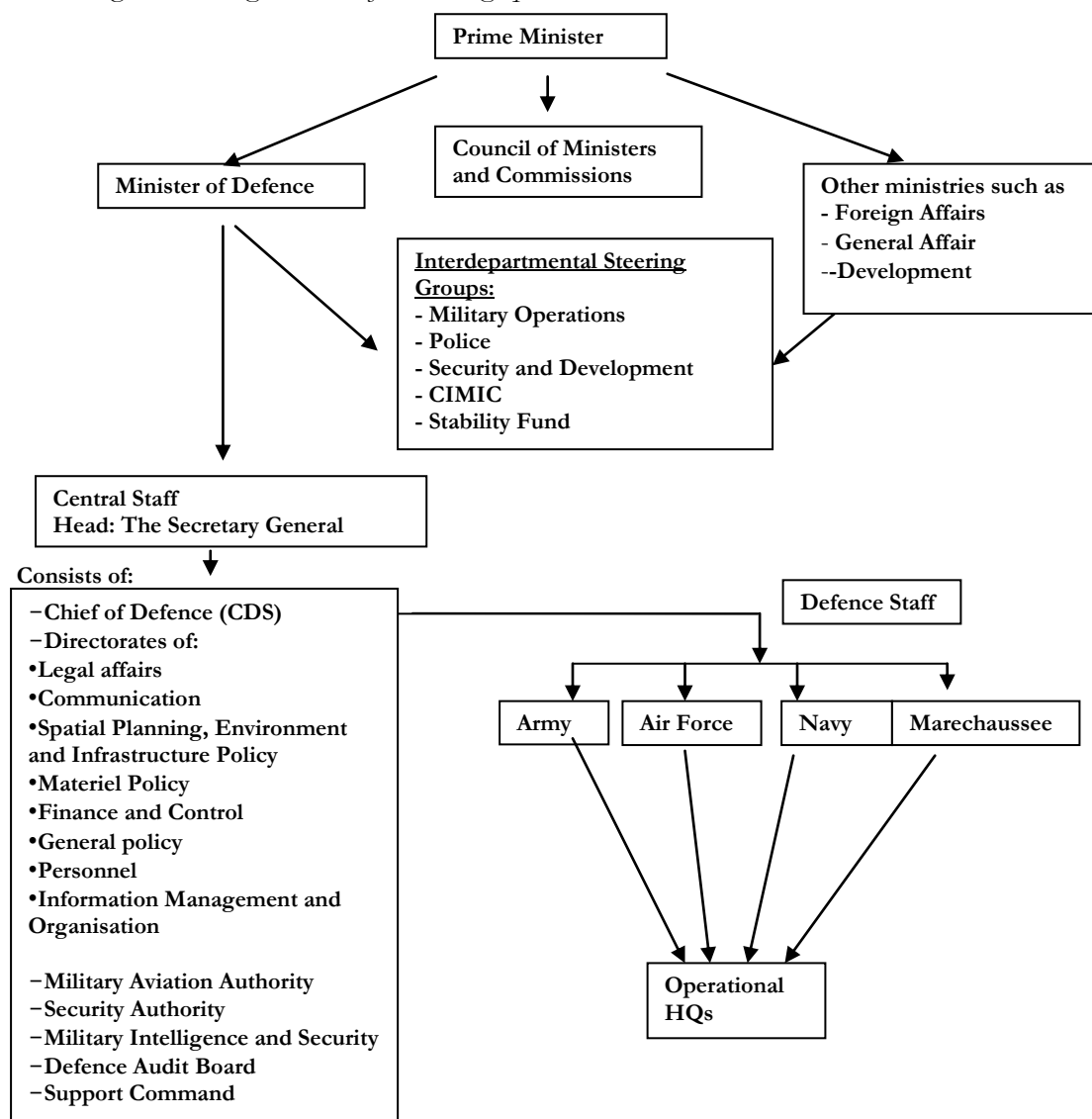
The structure and integration

The making of strategy involves the practical process of transforming political aims into military objectives, which in Western democracies consequently means the interaction between elected politicians, appointed civilian officials and professional military officers. The making of strategy is thus a practical activity that has to be organised and led. The manner in which the process of developing strategy is

⁵²⁵ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," (2011), pp. 46-47

organised and led is significant to the strategic behaviour of any state. Compared to the two other cases, the organisation of the strategic process in the Netherlands between 2003 and 2008 was characterised by political involvement, as well as political and military integration throughout the process. The organisation appeared to balance the need for political direction and military advice and expertise, in order to realise the practical aspects of the strategy in the political theatre of the Second Chamber as well as the theatres of Baghlan and Uruzgan. The organisation of the strategic process in the Netherlands was far from perfect, but nevertheless an important factor in understanding the relative advantages of the strategic behaviour of the Netherlands.

Figure: *The organisation of the strategic process in the Netherlands.*



The first element of the political involvement in the strategic process came through the influential role of the Dutch Parliament's Second Chamber, whose influence was both partly unintended and intended. The basic organisation of the Dutch government was similar to that of the two other parliamentary democracies of this study, in that the executive powers lay in the hands of the Prime Minister (*Minister President*) who was dependent on the Parliament's Second Chamber for overall political support. The domestic political situation made the organisation of the strategic process more influenced by politics in the Netherlands than in the two other states. A government in a parliamentary democracy cannot rule against a majority in parliament, and during the period of this study all three Balkenende governments were dependent on establishing a working relationship with the Dutch Parliament. This was of course particularly important in the case of the Balkenende-III government which was a minority government and thus depended on creating a parliamentary majority from case to case, but also the Balkenende-II and -IV majority governments had very slim majorities and were coalition governments in a volatile Dutch political culture where party and individual defections as well as backbencher rebellions were not uncommon. Complicating matters further, the international response to the Afghanistan conflict and its Dutch participation were controversial issues throughout the period. The strategic process in the Netherlands was thus influenced by the need to secure political support within the coalitions and in the Second Chamber. The Balkenende governments were forced to not only inform but also convince the Second Chamber in a public discussion and to present thoroughly reasoned explanations of its strategic behaviour in Afghanistan in 2004, 2005 and 2007.⁵²⁶ The two other states in this study did not have similar political and legislative involvement in the process. Both Norwegian governments during the period were majority coalitions, and just as the British, had no need to convince or involve the legislature as both the British and Norwegian governments enjoyed solid majorities across the isle on the issue of involvement in Afghanistan.

With respect to the use of force abroad, the governments were required by paragraph 100 in the Netherlands' Constitution to inform the Second Chamber '....on

⁵²⁶ Bot, Kamp, and Hoeven, "Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Development Co-Operation on Baghlan Deployment 28 June 2004 " p. 1; *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 1; *Ibid. Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, p. 4.

the intended use of the armed forces for the purposes of maintaining or promoting the international legal order...'.⁵²⁷ In addition, this information was required to be provided in accordance with the standard 'Assessment Framework' (*Toetsingskader*) for the deployment of military forces outside the territories of the Netherlands.⁵²⁸ Established days prior to the Srebrenica debacle, the framework demanded that the governments provided the Second Chamber with detailed information on their political intent, the situation on the ground, the risks involved, the legal ramifications of the deployment, as well as detailed information about the military forces deployed, and most importantly, how the military forces were to use force in order to achieve the political aims. Although the term strategy was used confusingly in the briefings and discussions (see below) it was nevertheless clear that the framework steered the governments of the Netherlands in a direction where they were forced to explain and discuss the relationship between their political intent and the use of force. The process of making strategy was thus from the outset subjected to more political oversight than was the case in Norway and in the UK, both due to deliberate design as well as due to the political situation.

The second aspect of the organisation of the Dutch strategic process pertaining to its strategic behaviour was the integration and co-ordination between political and military actors. The Dutch strategic organisation was similar to the Norwegian and the British organisations on paper when it came to the role of the executive. The differences lay in the organisation and tasks, as the Dutch Prime Minister was in charge of the Ministry of General Affairs, whose task it was to co-ordinate the governments' policies via the various ministries. The Prime Minister's own ministry had specific responsibilities in the organisation of the strategic process and its Secretary General was '...co-ordinator of intelligence and security service.'⁵²⁹ The actual impact of the Ministry of General Affairs on the co-ordination between the ministries during the period was somewhat disputed, and a 2009 advisory report criticised the Prime Minister and the Ministry of General Affairs of not being sufficiently involved in the actual co-ordination. In addition to the co-ordination mechanisms within the cabinet in which

⁵²⁷ Government of the Netherlands, "The Constitution of the Netherlands " <http://wetten.overheid.nl/>. Art 100, para 1.

⁵²⁸ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Introduction Bundle," ed. Netherlands Ministry of Defence (The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Defence, 2007), p. 9.

⁵²⁹ Netherlands Ministry of General Affairs, "Organisational Structure," <http://www.rijksoverheid.nl/ministeries/az/organisatie/organogram/secretaris-generaal>. (my translation)

the Prime Minister's own 'office' had enlarged responsibilities compared to both the UK and Norway, the Netherlands also had a permanent system of inter-ministerial committees. Whereas the Norwegian executive revolved around the cabinet as a unit and then the individual ministries, the cabinet of the Netherlands was divided into first cabinet committees and like the British cabinet system had a series of inter-ministerial co-ordination groups. The most important groups for the purpose of this study were the inter-ministerial co-ordination group for military operations (*Stuurgroep Militaire Operaties, SMO*), which comprised of representatives from the ministries of General Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Defence, as well as the groups for security and development (*Stuurgroep Veiligheidssamenwerking en Wederopbouw, SVW*), comprised of the Ministries of Finance, Defence, and Foreign Affairs, as well as a group for police and rule of law.⁵³⁰

The *SMO* was involved throughout the process of developing the strategy for the Uruzgan deployment in 2005 and met every week.⁵³¹ The *SMO* co-ordinated the operations but also involved the Ministry of General Affairs, and thus the Prime Minister. Other steering groups did not have a similar impact, for example the *SVW* had no participation from the Ministry of General Affairs.⁵³² How successful the actual co-operation was within the organisation is disputed, particularly when it came to the actual co-operation between the Prime Minister and the ministries, and their ability to lead field operations.⁵³³ The inter-ministerial co-operation was not perfect in the Netherlands during the period but compared to the two other states, a visible product of the Dutch organisation was that the Dutch involvement in Afghanistan was always presented as a joint effort between the different ministries in the Second Chamber as well as in public. This was a noticeable difference compared to the two other states where the ministers met individually with the legislature or public. The Dutch

⁵³⁰ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Introduction Bundle," p. 10; M.H. Klem, "Dutch Security Policy in a Changing World," (The Hague: WRR, 2010), p. 23.

⁵³¹ B.R. Bot and H.G.J. Kamp, "Brief for the Second Chamber by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence on 3 November 2005," (The Hague: The Second Chamber of the Parliament of the Netherlands, 2005), p. 1; Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," p. 252.

⁵³² Advisory Council on International Affairs, "Crisis Management Operations in Fragile States - the Need for a Coherent Approach," (The Hague: Advisory Council on International Affairs, 2009), pp. 60-61.

⁵³³ S.J.H. Rietjens, "Managing Civil-Military Cooperation Experiences from the Dutch Provincial Reconstruction Team in Afghanistan," *Armed Forces & Society* 34, no. 2 (2008); See: Advisory Council on International Affairs, "Crisis Management Operations in Fragile States - the Need for a Coherent Approach," pp. 60-63.

organisation of the strategic process was thus designed and used for political guidance and inter-ministerial co-operation to a larger degree than in Norway.

As in Norway, the actual planning of the military deployment was left to the Ministry of Defence. The Dutch MoD was reorganised between 2003 and 2005 and developed an integrated organisation with elected politicians, civil servants and military officers within the same structure.⁵³⁴ The 2003 change, which was implemented in 2005, introduced a central staff (*Bestuursstaf*) whereby the main civilian and military actors in the MoD were included. The Central Staff was headed by the senior civil servant in the MoD, the Secretary General, whose responsibility was to co-ordinate the policy development, operations, and materiel. The Central Staff included the Chief of Defence who was in the same organisational position as the Norwegian CHOD, with a civil servant between him and the politicians.⁵³⁵ This raised the same challenges as in the Norwegian case with respect to how the interaction between politicians and their military experts was to take place and how 'the dialogue between the unequals' was handled.⁵³⁶ The organisation of the strategic process in the Netherlands clearly let the political side have sufficient control, as well as ensuring that there was political and civilian involvement in the making of strategy, but the question was how the military advice could be taken into the equation when there was no organisational connection between the statesmen and the soldiers?

The integrated MoD and Defence Staff in the Netherlands was not designed with strategic effectiveness in mind, but rather, similarly to Norway, with financial efficiency in mind. The integration of the new Central Staff between 2003 and 2005 was to '...ensure that the armed forces remain affordable...' and to '...improve the efficiency of the Defence organisation....'⁵³⁷ The influence of management terms was so pronounced that the NDD described the Commander of the Dutch Armed Forces as

⁵³⁴ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Introducing the Central Staff of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence [*Sic*]," ed. Netherlands Ministry of Defence (The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Defence, 2006), p. 3.

⁵³⁵ The Commander of the Dutch Armed Forces was described in Dutch as CDS, *Commandant der Strijdkrachten* and was translated into English as Chief of Defence or Chief of Defence Staff. See: Netherlands Defence Staff, "Netherlands Defence Doctrine," ed. Central Staff Netherlands Ministry of Defence (The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Defence, 2005); Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Introducing the Central Staff of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence [*Sic*]."

⁵³⁶ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, pp. xii, p. 12ff and ch. 7.

⁵³⁷ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Introducing the Central Staff of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence [*Sic*]," p. 3.

the 'Corporate Operator'. The purpose behind the reorganisation was not described in terms of improving political and strategic decision-making but rather to work '....towards a new equilibrium: a balance between the tasks of the armed forces and the resources that are available to carry out those tasks.'⁵³⁸ The emphasis on the financial and economical issues rather than traditional strategy was also evident when the Central staff described its organisational model. It described the new organisation in terms of management rather than leadership and discussed 'implementation results' rather than strategic effect.⁵³⁹ As was also the case in Norway, the need for integration of civilians and military in its MoD had little to do with strategy as such, but more to do with the desire of the political level to supervise the use of resources allocated to the Dutch Armed Forces.

In Norway the integration of the MoD meant that the military organisation's ability to provide relevant military advice was reduced. An analysis of the Dutch political and strategic documents during the period did not reveal a similar tendency. The four Dutch assessment frameworks were all detailed as to what was expected of the military forces and how they were to operate. The military advice was included in all steps of the process and also directly involved with the political discussions. The Dutch CHOD presented his plan for Uruzgan to the Second Chamber on at least two occasions together with the ministers involved and was available for the actual debate on the issue.⁵⁴⁰ In addition, the political decision makers were presented with more than one piece of military advice as a matter of procedure.⁵⁴¹ Prior to the CHOD's report on Uruzgan, the intelligence services of the Netherlands (*MIVD*) presented their own report which was not in agreement with the CHOD.⁵⁴² It was this disagreement that amongst other factors led to the listing of sixteen critical points that would have to be resolved before the Dutch strategy in Uruzgan could be revealed. The organisation of the Dutch strategic process with a system of different organisations looking at the problem from various angles, illustrated the point made by Cohen that there is no uniform military advice and that politicians need to seek out various opinions and by doing so the politicians got involved not only in what was to be achieved but had

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵⁴⁰ Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," pp. 260 and 64.

⁵⁴¹ Netherlands Defence Staff, "Netherlands Defence Doctrine," NDD, p. 41.

⁵⁴² Hazelbag, "Political Decision Making of the Mission in Uruzgan, a Reconstruction," p. 256; Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Introduction Bundle," pp. 10-11.

enough information to look into how the political aims were to be realised.⁵⁴³ This illustrates that although the Dutch military advice was integrated at a relatively low level in the MoD, there was more than one source of military advice and the advice carried substantially more weight in the strategic decision-making than in Norway.

The reason for this may be found in the way the Dutch CHOD was integrated in the Central Staff and the role he was assigned as the highest military official. Although he was described as just a member of the Central Staff alongside the heads of other directorates, when it came to developing policy the Dutch strategic organisation gave the CHOD an unequivocal responsibility with respect to the implementation of the military strategy and operations:

*The Chief of Defence directs the Operational Commands from his position within the Central Staff and bears primary responsibility for the carrying out of military operations.*⁵⁴⁴

Compared to the Norwegian CHOD his Dutch counterpart was not only the prime adviser concerning military advice, the Dutch CHOD bore the responsibility for the military forces' realisation of the policies and strategy.⁵⁴⁵ The Dutch strategic organisation came closer than the two other states in realising Carl von Clausewitz's intent when he described how the military operations were to be in tune with the political aims. Clausewitz argued that the military commander should take part in the policy meetings in order that the policy makers could supervise the military operations.⁵⁴⁶ The Dutch Central Staff was on a lower level than Clausewitz suggested, but the principle of involving the commander in charge of the military forces in the council responsible for policy so that the commander could understand, advise and be supervised, was much the same. The Dutch CHOD's responsibility of realising the strategy with military forces was also emphasised in the Netherlands' Defence Doctrine, the NDD. The responsibility of the Dutch CHOD was according to the doctrine '... to translate the political objectives and guidelines into feasible military objectives down to tactical level', or in other words to actively take part in the making of Dutch strategy.⁵⁴⁷ This understanding of the vital role of the Dutch armed forces in

⁵⁴³ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, pp. 206-07.

⁵⁴⁴ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Introducing the Central Staff of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence [*Sic*]," p. 5.

⁵⁴⁵ "Introduction Bundle," p. 10.

⁵⁴⁶ Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, pp. 893-94.

⁵⁴⁷ Netherlands Defence Staff, "Netherlands Defence Doctrine," NDD, p. 19.

developing and implementing military strategy could be found in the NDD's purpose which was to explore '...the way in which military activities are performed (the 'how')', as opposed to the what and why.⁵⁴⁸

The organisation of the strategic process in the Netherlands was characterised by a higher degree of political involvement in the process of developing and implementing Dutch strategy during the period. Politicians from the executive and the legislative branch were more involved in the process than their Norwegian counterparts; this involvement was partially due to the difficult political situation in the Netherlands but the involvement was also by design. The organisation of the strategic process was designed for political involvement and inter-departmental co-operation, and it integrated the politicians, civil servants and the officers in a way that balanced the need for civilian control and involvement on the one hand, with the integration of the military advice and military responsibility for the implementation of the chosen strategy.

4) The Strategic Outlook

The next step is to explore the strategic outlook of the Dutch strategic organisation. Strategic outlook is defined in this study as the '...shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior....' pertinent to the strategic behaviour.⁵⁴⁹ In order to do so, the views of the strategic decision makers in the Netherlands will be explored, particularly in respect to the use of force and their understanding of strategy, as well as investigating the doctrines with which the Netherlands strived to implement their strategy.

The Netherlands' view of force and strategy

In comparison to the case of Norway, the Dutch views on the use of force and strategy were better documented and more coherently presented. The main reason for this was the comprehensive doctrine development that took place in the Netherlands between 1996 and 2005, but also the established procedures for strategic decision-making as mentioned in the previous chapter.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.16.

⁵⁴⁹ Kartchner et.al., quoted as found in Lantis, "Strategic Culture: From Clausewitz to Constructivism," p. 16.

As one of the purposes behind the Netherlands' deployment of troops to Afghanistan was support to international peace and security, the Dutch use of force in the Netherlands was throughout the period closely linked to international law. Similarly to Norway, the Netherlands' point of departure was international law and its limitations, but despite similar origins, the successive Dutch governments developed a strategic outlook where the use of force had a more pronounced role than in Norway. The relationship between the use of force and the promotion of international rule of law was embedded in the Dutch Constitution (*Grondwet*) which proclaimed that the Dutch Governments were obligated to promote the '....development of international law' (*Rechtsorde*), and that force could be employed to protect the interests of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, but also '...to uphold and promote international law.'⁵⁵⁰ The difference between Norway (post 2005) and the Netherlands was that the Dutch governments saw itself actively upholding and supporting international law also in cases where the United Nations could not provide a clear mandate, and reserved the right to use force in case of a humanitarian intervention.⁵⁵¹ International law was thus seen as enabling the use of force rather than limiting it. The reason for this was the Dutch understanding of what it meant to uphold and promote international law. Promoting international law was closely tied to Dutch interests *per se*, and not necessarily bound to the interpretation of the United Nations.⁵⁵² In this respect the Dutch governments were much closer to the British interpretation of international law, and consequently saw a larger role for the use of force in international society than did Norway. There was no mentioning of force only being used as a last resort, instead the use of military force as well as other instruments of power were described as useful in itself rather than just a necessary evil for a limited time. In the actual deployments, this positive view of force was more evident in the cases of the Uruzgan deployments of 2005 and 2007 than the deployment to Iraq in 2003, where the use of military force was described in more reluctant terms.⁵⁵³ However, the overall impression is that, much like the UK, the Netherlands's view of force was optimistic rather than reluctant and limited as was the case in Norway. The Netherlands' view of force was that the use of force could be necessary to realise national interests, and uphold and promote an international order based on international law. .

⁵⁵⁰ Government of the Netherlands, "The Constitution of the Netherlands " arts.90 and 100.

⁵⁵¹ Netherlands Defence Staff, "Netherlands Defence Doctrine," NDD, p. 33.

⁵⁵² Bot, "The Dutch Approach: Preserving the Trinity of Politics, Security and Development ".

⁵⁵³ Zaalberg and Cate, "A Gentle Occupation:", p. 123.

The next question is how the Dutch view of force related to actual strategy. Strategy, as understood in this study is the process of utilising force or the threat of force for the purpose of political ends. The discussion of the Dutch view of strategy will be framed by two alternative views developed from this basic definition; the views of Clausewitz and Liddell Hart. The Clausewitzian view of strategy is closely linked to the use of military force, combat and violence to realise the political intent, and puts emphasis on the practical and physical application of military force. Liddell Hart's view of strategy, the grand strategy perspective, emphasises power rather than force and is thus concerned with the co-ordination of all instruments of power available to the government, not only the military instrument. The main challenge of the grand strategy view is that the emphasis on power and co-ordination may make strategy indistinguishable from politics in general.

Similarly to the Norwegian governments, the successive Dutch governments did not use the term strategy in a consistent or coherent manner. At the political level, the term strategy was used interchangeably with policy and security policy. The term was also used as an adjective describing everything connected with security policy and elements associated with a particular level such as 'strategic transport', or indeed any plan or undertaking regardless of whether or not force was envisaged to be part of its realisation.⁵⁵⁴ All in all, the usage of the term strategy at the political level in the Netherlands was not precise and subject to the criticism presented by Howard and Strachan, who argued that strategy had lost its meaning.⁵⁵⁵ This lack of conceptual clarity aside, the Dutch government clearly adopted a grand strategy view, where it saw itself developing parallel and connected strategies which were to be realised by the different government agencies. This was clearly stated in its strategic doctrine, the NDD, but also in its various statements on its deployment to Baghlan and Uruzgan.⁵⁵⁶

By adopting a grand strategy view the Netherlands were able to co-ordinate the efforts of its various actors. In comparison to the other two states this was noticeable

⁵⁵⁴ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "The Future Policy Survey," ed. Netherlands Ministry of Defence (The Hague: Netherlands Ministry of Defence, 2010), p. 5; "Introduction Bundle," pp. 28 and 89.

⁵⁵⁵ Strachan, "The Lost Meaning of Strategy."

⁵⁵⁶ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 21; Netherlands Defence Staff, "Netherlands Defence Doctrine," pp. 15-17.

in the Dutch campaign in Uruzgan where the Dutch government went to great lengths to present its foreign policy, developmental, and military aims as a whole, all being realised by one plan, conceptually and practically. Although the actual co-operation on the ground was not without flaws, the Dutch strategy in Baghlan and Uruzgan clearly benefitted from the governments' desire to co-ordinate its civilian and military efforts compared to Norway, who did not want to see its efforts as a practical whole, and compared to the UK, which suffered from a lack of practical integration in the early stages of its Helmand campaign.⁵⁵⁷ The Dutch organisation of its strategic process, with its emphasis on procedures, appeared to prevent one of the drawbacks of the grand strategy perspective, namely the tendency of grand strategy to become '...practically synonymous....' with policy.⁵⁵⁸ Strategy, if it is to have a meaning distinct from policy, must focus on the way that force is to realise the political aims, not simply reiterate them; a challenge if policy and strategy become synonymous. The strategy of the Dutch governments in Uruzgan was not unambiguous, but it was possible from the outset to discern how the different elements of the Dutch grand strategy were to realise the political ambitions and what practical steps were to be taken in relation time and space. The Dutch strategy went beyond policy when in 2005 it made a priority out of the Southern parts of the province, and only focused on the two main towns in this area, making this the only priority of the Dutch military and civilian assets.⁵⁵⁹ This practical approach to grand strategy, which was notably absent from the Norwegian governments' approach to Afghanistan emerged as part of the Balkenende-II government's presentation of the framework (*toetsingskader*) for decision-making, which demanded that the Dutch governments analysed and presented the relationship between its ends, available means, and the possible ways to realise its ends.

A second challenge with adopting a grand strategy perspective is that as the main focus is to co-ordinate the different actors' strategies, the overall strategy does not properly take into account that military strategy involves direction of the actual use of force. The Netherlands' approach during the period appeared to avoid this pitfall to some extent, as its armed forces deployed to Afghanistan were provided with political direction on how, where and when the armed forces were to employ force. Although

⁵⁵⁷ Advisory Council on International Affairs, "Crisis Management Operations in Fragile States - the Need for a Coherent Approach," p. 54.

⁵⁵⁸ Liddell Hart, *The Strategy of Indirect Approach*, pp. 187 and 202.

⁵⁵⁹ Bot and Kamp, "Brief for the Second Chamber by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence on 3 November 2005," p. 15.

not a distinct feature of the political directions given to the Dutch forces in Al-Muthannah in Iraq, by 2006 the political involvement in the way that Dutch forces used force was more prevalent.⁵⁶⁰ The 2005 and 2007 briefing to the Second Chamber included chapters on the way that force should be used to realise the political intent, by stressing the outreach with the local population, operational procedures and the assistance of the ASF, but it also gave direction as how, when and where force should be employed. This indicated that the Dutch governments, helped by the procedures of the framework, gradually improved its understanding of practical strategy during the period and that the normal criticism of the grand strategy perspective did not apply fully to the Dutch strategic behaviour during the period.

The Netherlands' doctrine

As indicated above, the Armed Forces of the Netherlands embarked on its missions in Kabul, Baghlan and Uruzgan with an internally coherent and comprehensive system of doctrines. The Dutch military doctrines of the period corresponded with the actions of the Dutch government and its military forces on a number of issues, and were thus important in explaining Dutch strategic behaviour during the period.

Between 1996 and 2005, after the debacle of Srebrenica, the Dutch armed services, excluding the *Marechaussee*, all developed new service doctrines in addition to the development of an overall defence doctrine in 2005.⁵⁶¹ The doctrinal platform was comprehensive in scope and included an overall Army doctrine (ADP I) in addition to specific doctrines for general operations (ADP IIA), conventional operations (ADP IIB), as well as specific doctrines addressing counter-insurgency (ADP IIC) and PSO (ADP III). Compared to Norway and the UK, the system and hierarchy was somewhat more authoritative and comprehensive, in that the theoretical platform was consistent throughout the process of writing the doctrines from the initial general military doctrine of 1996 via the conflict specific doctrines, ending in the overall defence doctrine of 2005.⁵⁶²

⁵⁶⁰ Zaalberg and Cate, "A Gentle Occupation", pp. 122ff.

⁵⁶¹ Netherlands Defence Staff, "Netherlands Defence Doctrine," p. 7.

⁵⁶² Compare: *Ibid.*, p. 23-24; Commander in Chief Royal Netherlands Army, *Military Doctrine (Adp I)*, vol. I, Royal Netherlands Army Doctrine Publication (The Hague: Doctrine Committee of the

The link between the Dutch political intent and its military doctrine was not altogether clear. Although the political aims described the conflict in Afghanistan in terms akin to irregular warfare and described its own strategic goals in ways that were close to counter-insurgency, the Dutch government refrained from using the same terms as did the military doctrine. The government consistently referred to the operations as 'reconstruction' operations rather than irregular warfare or counter-insurgency, whereas the 2003 military doctrine used the term 'counter-insurgency' from page one.⁵⁶³ When characterising the Dutch strategy from 2006 and onwards the Dutch government used terminology not found in the Dutch doctrine from 2003. This divergence in terminology could be attributed to the politically controversial nature of the Dutch operations in Afghanistan and the three governments' desire to make the military operations appear less forceful, as well as the desire to adapt its terminology to ISAF and the other members of the coalition. Nevertheless, when comparing the governments' actual descriptions and guidelines for the military operations between 2003 and 2008 with the 2003 military doctrine, there were significant similarities that indicated that the doctrine influenced the strategic behaviour or at least represented a common Dutch understanding of the situation in Baghlan and in particular the insurgency in the Uruzgan province. The similarities went to the core of the understanding of the character of the conflict, the development of strategy and the choice of strategic direction in Uruzgan, as well as how the Dutch actors should be organised and operate. The Dutch armed forces were thus well prepared doctrinally in order to advise the Dutch government and subsequently carry out operations that would realise the political intent of the Netherlands in Afghanistan.

The doctrines most relevant to explain the strategic behaviour of the Netherlands in Afghanistan were the Royal Netherlands Army's doctrines on counterinsurgency and PSO. Issued in 2003 and 1999 respectively, the two doctrines drew the distinction between counter-insurgency and PSO through the questions of consent and impartiality. Both doctrines employed the traditional British 'wider peacekeeping' perspective that the defining aspects of PSO are consent and

Royal Netherlands Army, 1996), pp. 166-71; *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, Introduction and pp. 574-75.

⁵⁶³ Zaalberg, "Hearts and Minds or Search and Destroy, pp. 290-91; Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, p. 471; Zaalberg, "To Coin or Not to Coin," p. 120.

impartiality.⁵⁶⁴ In order to define peacekeeping, consent from all parties involved was needed, whereas peace enforcement required an ambition of employing force impartially within the framework of a peace agreement, past or future.⁵⁶⁵ The Dutch doctrine thus was in line with the peacekeeping ideas of the 1990s, but not in line with the new United Nations' peacekeeping ideas that developed during the period of 2003 to 2008.⁵⁶⁶ From the perspective of the Dutch armed forces, the distinguishing features between counter-insurgency operations and PSO were consequently consent and impartiality. The Dutch doctrines stated that if these features were not present, the international force had taken sides in the conflict and the conflict belonged in the category of counter-insurgency. Therefore, the Dutch armed forces argued that '[c]ounter-insurgency operations thus belong in the category of **combat operations**'⁵⁶⁷ This meant that when the Dutch government defined its objectives as taking the side of the Afghan government against the Taliban and the OMF, the military forces had a doctrine that suited this line of thinking; the 2003 Dutch doctrine on combat operations against an irregular force. The existence of a Dutch doctrine helps explain the comparative ease with which the Dutch government and its armed forces adapted to the peculiar character of the conflict in Afghanistan and developed its strategy between 2004 and 2010. This was in contrast to the Norwegian government, who defined the Norwegian operations in the terms of PSO and peace building operations until 2010 and rarely discussed its operations in relation to an adversary.⁵⁶⁸

Although the Dutch governments were reluctant to use the term counter-insurgency it saw the conflict in Afghanistan in much the same light as its armed forces' doctrine. Particularly its two briefings for the Second Chamber prior to the Chambers' vote on the deployment and continued deployment of the Dutch contingents, illustrated a view of the conflict that saw the problem in Afghanistan as a political and ideological struggle between the Netherlands (through its ally the Karzai regime) and in particular the Taliban movement. The problem was thus fundamentally of a political nature, and the political struggle was played out with the support of the people of

⁵⁶⁴ Compare: C. Dobbie, "A Concept for Post-Cold War Peacekeeping," *Survival* 36, no. 3 (1994); Royal Netherlands Army, *Peace Operations*, pp. 77-78 and 83-84.

⁵⁶⁵ *Peace Operations (Adp III)*, Army Doctrine Publication III, p. 77-78.

⁵⁶⁶ Compare: United Nations, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines," pp. 19 and 34.

⁵⁶⁷ Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, p. 479. (emphasis in original)

⁵⁶⁸ Barth Eide, "Why Is Norway in Afghanistan? How Can We Best Complete Our Mission?", pp. 1 and 5; Minister of Defence, "Our Engagement in Afghanistan", p. 5.

Uruzgan as the key factor. The briefings argued that '[t]he Taliban depends on the population for support....' and that the Dutch detachment would achieve its objectives through '....increasing the support of the local population for the Afghan authorities, and reduce the support for the Taliban and other groups.'⁵⁶⁹ This way of understanding a conflict was at the heart of the 2003 insurgency doctrine, which argued that '....the **support of the civilian population** for the insurgents tends to be the centre of gravity.'⁵⁷⁰ Furthermore, the doctrine argued that any measures against insurgents was '....designed to strip the insurgents of their credibility and support among the population.'⁵⁷¹ The 2003-doctrine and the Netherlands' governments during the period thus saw the conflict in the same light, as that of an insurgency where the key was to gain the population's support.

As a consequence of the 2003-doctrine's understanding of the political nature of counter-insurgency, the doctrine required a direct and active political involvement in the development of the overall strategy, strategic alternatives, as well as the actual campaign plan.⁵⁷² The Dutch experience, particularly in Uruzgan, reflected this. The volatility of the Dutch political process of getting the Second Chamber to vote for the Uruzgan deployment meant that the process of developing the Dutch strategy was very elaborate and the ensuing political debate was rich in operational detail. The two government briefings in the Chamber outlined a population centric approach, making the two largest towns in the more populated Southern part of the Uruzgan province a priority rather than maintaining all four OEF-bases.⁵⁷³ This matched the overall view of the 2003-doctrine, which argued for a conceptual approach which emphasised physical protection of the population '....against the influence of the insurgents and to create a division between the two' as soon as the insurgents' freedom of movement was restricted.⁵⁷⁴ The 2003-doctrine also advocated an incremental strategy where areas were gradually secured from a secured base area, using either an 'eccentric' or a

⁵⁶⁹ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 3; *Ibid.*; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, p. 13ff.

⁵⁷⁰ Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, p. 577. (Emphasis in original)

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 487.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 500-01.

⁵⁷³ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 15; *Ibid.*; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, p. 14.

⁵⁷⁴ *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, pp. 574-75.

‘concentric’ approach.⁵⁷⁵ Compared to Norway, where a divergence developed between the government’s political intent and the operational ideas of its armed forces towards the end of the period, the Dutch case illustrated a clear link between the Dutch armed forces’ doctrines and the strategy decided by the Dutch government two years later.

After 2006, the Dutch government and its armed forces described its strategy in terms of an ‘ink spot’ (*inktvlek*) approach in the province where the centre of the ink spot was represented by the ADZs.⁵⁷⁶ The enlargement of the ADZs and its eventual link-up with others was described by the Dutch governments’ own study as a Dutch interpretation of counter-insurgency and the Shape -Clear- Hold - Build approach.⁵⁷⁷ The 2003-doctrine did not use these terms, which could indicate other sources of influence on the Dutch strategy. The terms ‘ink spot’ and ‘Shape - Clear – Hold – Build’ were found in the British and US’ doctrines from 2001 and 2006 respectively, but were also part of the same population centric counter-insurgency theories developed during the Malayan and Algerian campaigns of the 1950s; theories that the Dutch doctrine relied on extensively.⁵⁷⁸ The discrepancies between the terminology was in itself not a significant departure from the Dutch Army doctrine but rather illustrates the increased use and exchanges between the various strands of the classic population centric theories during the period. The essence of the Dutch strategy was the choice of protecting the population and winning their support and by doing so starting in the most heavily populated areas and gradually expanding these areas instead of chasing an enemy in the outlying areas of Uruzgan. This was also the essence of the Dutch Army’s doctrinal approach from 1996, reiterated in 2003, which argued for an emphasis of separating the insurgents from the general population by protecting the population and then gradually expanding the protection from the base areas into forward bases while limiting the insurgents’ freedom of movement. Although the 2006 terminology was somewhat different from the Dutch official doctrine from 1996 and 2003, the terminology and the doctrines used the same underlying theories, indicating the influence of the doctrines in Dutch strategic behaviour or at least a shared

⁵⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 637-40.

⁵⁷⁶ Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "The Netherlands in Afghanistan," p. 14; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, p. 32; Teeuw, "The Dutch Approach in Uruzgan."

⁵⁷⁷ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," p. 17.

⁵⁷⁸ Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, pp. 621ff and chapter 2; *Military Doctrine (Adp I)*, I, p. 165.

understanding between the armed forces and the government in their counter-insurgency approach.⁵⁷⁹

The Dutch doctrines and the chosen Dutch strategy were also in line on how force should be used. Both the doctrines and the government's briefings in 2005 and 2007 emphasised the limited use of force and the '...respectful [...] and open attitude...' required by the Dutch troops in contact with the insurgents and the civilian population in order to win the population's support as '[t]he frequent and excessive use of force will lead to the evaporation of support among the favourably disposed part of the population.'⁵⁸⁰ In both the doctrines and the government briefings, the limited use of force was argued both from a perspective of utility; that limited use of force produced popular support and thus legitimacy, but also from the perspective of international humanitarian law. The Dutch strategy, supported by its doctrine, thus saw a relationship between the limited use of force and counter-insurgency, a relationship not always borne out by historical evidence.⁵⁸¹ Nevertheless, the emphasis on limited use of force, combined with an open and inviting attitude, was seen by many as the basis of the so-called Dutch approach, which set the Dutch troops apart from the more aggressive contingents in Afghanistan.⁵⁸² The idea that there was a distinctly unique Dutch way of operating in Iraq and Afghanistan, a Dutch Approach, is hard to substantiate as the different authors emphasise different factors, but also because the Dutch ideas were taken from existing counter-insurgency theories. What is more interesting for this study was the congruence between the doctrinal platform of the Dutch armed forces and the political directions with respect to the use of force.

The final point on the links between the Dutch armed forces doctrine and the Dutch strategy deals with organisation. The 2003-doctrine's initial understanding of an insurgency as a predominantly political conflict was followed by the conclusion that

⁵⁷⁹ *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p. 14; *Ibid.*; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, p. 31.

⁵⁸⁰ *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, p. 589; *Brief for the Second Chamber on Dutch Participation in ISAF Operations in Southern Afghanistan*, p.14; *Ibid.*; *Brief by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Development Co-Operation 30 November 2007*, p.31.

⁵⁸¹ Alex Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 21, no. 2 (2010).

⁵⁸² Gooren, "Soldiers in Unfamiliar Places: The Dutch Approach."; Zaalberg and Cate, "A Gentle Occupation", p. 120; Damian Grammaticas, "Dutch 'Success' in Afghan Conflict," *BBC News*, 3 July 2009.

direct political involvement was necessary as the '[d]esired military and political end state [is] directly and closely linked to each other.'⁵⁸³ Consequently, it was '...vitally important to achieve unity of effort between the components of the operation ...', and to develop an integrated operations plan led by '...a civilian or political official, who would '...then quickly set up a **joint military-civil command and control structure**,...' and perform his tasks according to '...strict political guidelines.'⁵⁸⁴ This mirrored the emphasis of the Dutch operations between 2003 and 2008 where there was a pronounced emphasis on the integration of civilian and military resources under civilian authority as the doctrine envisaged.⁵⁸⁵ The 2003-doctrine helps explain the willingness of the Dutch government to deploy civilians into both Iraq and Afghanistan, but perhaps more so the willingness of the armed forces to accept the civilians as experts and eventually as heads of the Dutch PRT. This doctrinal approach was similar to the British Army's doctrinal position, which also advocated that the counter-insurgency effort was to be led by one person who was guided by '...strict government guidelines and overall control', whilst the British 2001-doctrine left it up to situation and '...personalities of the individuals involved' to decide whether a single command or a committee system should be used.⁵⁸⁶ Compared to the Norwegian perspective, the Dutch 2003-doctrine was diametrically opposite because whilst the Norwegian armed forces did not have doctrines for either peacekeeping or counter-insurgency operations, the Norwegian government held the position that the military and the civilian organisation should be kept separate.

The main principles found in the RNLA's 2003-doctrine were not revolutionary; indeed most the doctrine was directly influenced by British and French counter-insurgency ideas from the 1950s and onwards, in particular the ideas of Robert Thompson derived from his experiences in Malaya and Vietnam.⁵⁸⁷ However, there was a distinctly Dutch flair to the manner in which the Dutch armed forces reasoned and discussed when it came to insurgencies. The Dutch army's own experiences in Indonesia were integrated with the British and French experiences, as well as more

⁵⁸³ Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, p. 495.

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 501ff.(Emphasis in original)

⁵⁸⁵ The Government of the Netherlands, "Final Evaluation - Netherlands Contribution to ISAF, 2006 - 2010," p. 31.

⁵⁸⁶ Ministry of Defence, "Army Field Manual - Part 10, Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)," ed. CGS(London: CGS, 2001), p. B-3-4.

⁵⁸⁷ See: Royal Netherlands Army, *Combat Operations - Combat Operations against an Irregular Force*, pp. 500 and 750.

modern examples of insurgencies and counter-insurgencies, making the traditional counter-insurgency theories relevant to the Dutch Army. The Dutch armed forces had a doctrinal platform that prepared them for the general challenges of insurgencies and to some extent the immediate challenges of Afghanistan, and thus provide relevant advice to its government. Most significantly, the Dutch armed forces had a doctrine that was congruent with the political intent before and during the operations in Afghanistan. This helps explain the comparative ease with which the Netherlands government and its armed forces managed to create a comprehensive strategy for its operations in Uruzgan - a characteristic of its strategic behaviour during the period.

Chapter V: The United Kingdom

*'For arms are of little value in the field unless there is wise counsel at home.'*⁵⁸⁸

Cicero

1) The Political Purposes and Aims of the United Kingdom:

The UK was involved in Afghanistan during the early stages of the conventional deployment in the initial struggle to topple the Taliban and secure the new interim Afghani regime established after the Bonn Conference in November 2001. The UK maintained its presence in both the US led Operation Enduring Freedom, as well as taking on a lead role in establishing ISAF in 2001 by providing troops as well as seconding General McColl as ISAF's first commander.⁵⁸⁹

Political purpose:

Denying access to terrorists:

As in the two other cases, examples of political aims behind the UK's use of force during the period were plentiful and not difficult to find.⁵⁹⁰ Throughout the period of this study it was possible to discern no less than eight or nine different aims given by senior officials and politicians at different stages. The problem was therefore not finding them but to determine how they related to one another, and what kind of strategic logic they represented. Although the period illustrated that there were multiple and conflicting British aims, one overall purpose surfaced for the period as a whole. The purpose of preventing Afghanistan from being an ungoverned territory, and thereby denying access to Afghanistan to radical Islamists was intermittently presented as the main purpose by the British government and was logically of a higher order than most other aims and objectives. The overall political purpose behind the British strategy during the period from 2003 to 2008 was to deny Al Qaeda, the Taliban and

⁵⁸⁸ Cicero, *On Duties - De Officiis Xxi*, ed. Jeffrey Henderson, trans. Walter Miller, 2001 ed., The Loeb Classical Library (London: Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 77.

⁵⁸⁹ House of Commons Defence Committee, *Annual Report for 2002 - Second Report of the Session 2002-2003*, 2003, p. 9.

⁵⁹⁰ A Lieven, "Afghanistan: An Unsuitable Candidate for State Building," *Conflict, Security & Development* 7, no. 3 (2007).

other radical Islamists access to the territory of Afghanistan and prevent Afghan soil from once again becoming a base and breeding ground of international terrorism. This political purpose behind the British use of force preceded the NATO operation of this study and was evident from the first the time British military force was used in Afghanistan in October 2001.⁵⁹¹ The purpose was initially linked directly to the September 11 attacks and the harbouring of Al Qaeda on Afghani soil by the Taliban regime and was further linked to the aim of removing the Taliban regime. Prime Minister Blair's speech to the House of Commons in early October 2001, illustrates this: '...our immediate objectives are clear. We must bring bin Laden and other al-Qaeda leaders to justice and eliminate the terrorist threat that they pose, and we must ensure that Afghanistan ceases to harbour and sustain international terrorism.'⁵⁹²

The initial use of force relied on the rationale of denying the radical Islamists access to bases in Afghanistan, but by 2003 and 2004 this purpose had become less prominent. Although British operations in Kabul and to a lesser degree in Mazar-E-Sharif were involved in counter-terrorism- and law and order operations, the overall purpose of preventing radical Islamism a foothold in Afghanistan was less clearly communicated.⁵⁹³ The overall purpose took a back seat to more subordinate political and strategic aims. The Parliamentary proceedings and hearings in 2002 and 2003 were not concerned with the overall purpose of the British deployment to Afghanistan.⁵⁹⁴ In 2004 Foreign Minister Jack Straw's speech on Afghanistan gave scant attention to any overall purpose that had led to the British commitment, but emphasised instead the more concrete objectives such as the strengthening of the Afghan state, the DDR-process, and most importantly the counter-narcotics operations that lay '....at the heart of all our work in Afghanistan.'⁵⁹⁵ This lack of attention to an overall purpose behind the British deployment corresponded with the situation on the ground in Afghanistan in 2003 and 2004, where it appeared that Afghanistan did not face significant threats

⁵⁹¹ PBS, "Tony Blair's Speech 7 October 2001," Public Broadcasting Service, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/terrorism/combating/diplomacy/blair_10-7.html.

⁵⁹² Tony Blair, "Coalition against International Terrorism, House of Commons Debate 4 October, 2001," (London: House of Commons, 2001), col. 673.

⁵⁹³ British Force Commander in 2003, House of Commons Defence Committee, *Operations in Afghanistan - Oral Evidence Hc 554ii*, 2010, Q 69.

⁵⁹⁴ See for example: Defence Committee's Defence-Select-Committee, "Annual Report for 2002 - Second Report of the Session 2002-2003," ed. House of Commons Defence Committee (London: The Stationary Office, 2003).

⁵⁹⁵ Jack Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan," in *Foreign Secretary's Speech*, ed. IISS (London: IISS, 2004), p.4.

from radical Islamists. An even more important factor was of course that the operations in Iraq took centre stage from late 2002 and onwards, leaving only minor British units in Kabul and in the PRTs in Northern Afghanistan.

From late 2004 the British attention was again turned towards the operations in Afghanistan through Tony Blair's promise to commit troops to stage 3 of the NATO enlargement.⁵⁹⁶ With this change and the ensuing planning of the Helmand operations, the need to communicate a clear political purpose behind the British deployment resurfaced. Whereas the purpose of denying radical Islamists access to Afghan soil lay dormant during the first two years of the UK's NATO operations, the purpose reappeared in late 2005. John Reid's speech in the House of Commons proposed a series of strategic and operational objectives, all of which were '....to ensure that international terrorism never again has a base in Afghanistan.'⁵⁹⁷ He added that the risks involved were '....nothing compared to the dangers to our country and our people of allowing Afghanistan to fall back into the hands of the Taliban and international terrorism.'⁵⁹⁸

During the ensuing hearings in the Defence Committee in early 2006, the Director General of Operational Policy in the Ministry of Defence, Martin Howard, explained that the UK was in Afghanistan to '....reduce the risk of Afghanistan either in part or whole reverting to the kind of ungoverned space....' that it had been during the 1990s.⁵⁹⁹ The overall purpose to deny access to Afghan soil to radical Islamists was therefore important prior to the British operations in Helmand and the subsequent involvement in stage 3 of NATO's enlargement of its responsibilities. However, one year later during the first review of British operations in the Helmand, there was no similar emphasis on the purpose of denying access to radical Islamists, instead the hearings and evidence indicated a preoccupation with the more concrete political and strategic objectives such as strengthening security and improving regional governance. Given the nature of the British experiences in Helmand Province in the autumn of 2006, where original operational plans were rendered irrelevant by the changing

⁵⁹⁶ General Sir Richard Dannatt, "The Challenge for Defence in the Next Decade " in *Chief of General Staff's Speech*, ed. IISS(IISS, 2009); *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev. p. 46, para 10.

⁵⁹⁷ Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006," col. 1531.

⁵⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, col. 1533.

⁵⁹⁹ Martin Howard, in *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev. p. 1.

priorities of the regional Afghan authorities, the lack of focus on the overall purpose is understandable, but it was indicative of the lack of overall logic and consistency that the purpose was not brought to the forefront of the discussions.

The British government's intermittent focus on the political purpose and intent when explaining the British use of force in Afghanistan is emphasised by the statement made by the new Secretary of Defence Timothy Hutton a year and a half after these Parliamentary hearings. In his Remembrance Day speech at the IISS he argued that the main purpose and intent behind the British deployment was indeed to prevent radical Islam and terrorism from returning to Afghanistan. By the end of 2008 he argued that Britain remained in Afghanistan '...based on a hard-headed assessment of our clear national security interest in preventing the re-emergence of Taleban rule or Afghanistan's decline into a failing state again.'⁶⁰⁰ This re-emergence of the purpose was also visible in the 2008 National Security Strategy (NSS), where the national security aims were geared towards the threats posed by terrorism and failed states, two of the main challenges facing the UK.⁶⁰¹ The National Security Strategy argued for an important role for the armed forces in pursuing terrorists and used Afghanistan as an example of an operation designed to pursue terrorists, and the purpose of the Afghanistan mission was '...to deprive terrorist networks of their sanctuaries.'⁶⁰² The end of the period therefore appeared to have produced a somewhat clearer political intent and purpose than between 2003 and 2006. The increased emphasis on communicating one purpose or intent towards the end of the period was also reinforced by a speech made by PM Gordon Brown in 2009, where he reiterated the purpose provided by Hutton and the NSS, even utilising the same phrases during the speech. In his speech the PM stressed that although the UK had multiple political and strategic aims in Afghanistan they should not be confused with the purpose or the intent behind the deployment: 'The fundamental reason [for the British presence in Afghanistan] is to ensure Al Qaeda cannot again use this region as a base to train and plan terrorist attacks across the world.'⁶⁰³ Brown also argued that this purpose or intent behind the British use of force in Afghanistan was the same in 2009 as in 2001.

⁶⁰⁰ Hutton, "Speech to the IISS 11 November 2008." (2008)

⁶⁰¹ HM Government, "The National Security Strategy: Security in an Interdependent World," ed. The Cabinet Office (London: The Stationary Office, 2008), pp. 7, 10 and 13.

⁶⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁶⁰³ Brown, "Transcript of Speech and Q and a Given by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on Friday, September 4 2009," pp. 9 and 2., compare: 'Hard-headed assessment' ; Hutton, "Speech to the IISS 11 November 2008," p.2.

Although communicated intermittently and more strongly towards the end of the period, the purpose of denying radical Islamists access to Afghanistan guided the British use of force most of the period. The challenge was that it was not used to establish a strategic logic, it was also unclear who was to be denied access or deprived of sanctuaries, and the purpose was not communicated consistently during the period.

Political aims and objectives

Assisting the Afghan government

The political purpose and intent was not communicated consistently or precisely throughout the period of this study. Instead it took a backseat to other political and strategic aims. The most frequently communicated political aim directing the use of force in Afghanistan was the aim of assisting or strengthening the Afghani government appointed during the Bonn-conference in 2001 and popularly confirmed through the *Loya Jirga* of 2003-2004 and the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2005.

Throughout the period of 2003 and 2008, the aim was emphasised and in line with ISAF connected with subordinate aims designed to strengthen or extend the reach of the Afghan authority in Kabul, its capacities and its system of government. The aim was emphasised through out the period, from the initial deployment of forces to Kabul in 2003 and the stage 1 expansion into the Northern provinces in 2004.⁶⁰⁴ Initially the aim was designed to strengthen the Kabul regime in and around Kabul, but through the NATO expansion plan, the British aim was changed to the ambition of extending the Afghan government's reach.⁶⁰⁵ The aim of strengthening the Afghan state and extending its reach was one of the two important factors influencing the decision to deploy British troops to Helmand rather than any of the other Afghan provinces.⁶⁰⁶ The need for extending the Afghan governance was not necessarily linked directly to the province of Helmand, as there was no analysis as to what made the province more in need of assistance compared to other Southern provinces. The choice of Helmand was instead influenced by the desire to deal with the fact that the province was the most important area for opium production. (See below) After the UK *de facto* reduced

⁶⁰⁴ *Operations in Afghanistan - Oral Evidence Hc 554ii*, q. 69.

⁶⁰⁵ Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan." (2004)

⁶⁰⁶ MoD Director General for Operational Policy in: *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 1.

its ambitions in the field of counter-narcotics in 2006, the aim of improving governance became the focal point of the evaluation of the first year of operations in Helmand in 2007. The aim was henceforth communicated as the political aim directing the use of force and therefore the UK's strategy. The return to the focus on governance came after the original Helmand plan ran into difficulties during autumn of 2006.⁶⁰⁷ The emphasis put on the aim is illustrated by the fact that it was sometimes referred by government officials as the political purpose behind the British deployment to Afghanistan, on par with the purpose of preventing a return of the Taliban and the AQ to Afghanistan.⁶⁰⁸ The aim was emphasised through the years of 2007 and 2008, but with the publications of the National Security Strategy and ACPAK strategy in 2008 and 2009, the aim of expanding Afghani governance was seen as the most important way to further the overall purpose rather than being the purpose itself.⁶⁰⁹ This was also evident in the speeches given after 2006, where the aim of improving and extending governance was directing the overall counter-insurgency strategy and the *Afghanisation* of the security operations, and was seen as the best means to realise the overall purpose described above.⁶¹⁰

Security

During the early stages of the NATO period, from 2003 to 2005, the emphasis from the UK, and NATO, was on the DDR-process in the area in and around Kabul. The strengthening of the central Afghan government was seen as linked to the disbanding of the remaining militias of the Northern alliance.⁶¹¹ In conjunction with the DDR process, which was largely completed by 2005, the aim was to assist the new regime in Kabul with the maintenance of security. The security operations initially were provided by small units providing law and order and protection of the regime in Kabul, and then later in the Northern province of Mazar e-Sharif. This security presence took the form of support to local police while the first Afghan National Army units were

⁶⁰⁷ Secretary of Defence Des Browne in: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 2.

⁶⁰⁸ MoD Director General Operations Martin Howard in: *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 1.

⁶⁰⁹ See: HM Government, "The National Security Strategy: Security in an Interdependent World," p. 6.

⁶¹⁰ Brown, "Transcript of Speech and Q and a Given by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on Friday, September 4 2009," p. 3; Hutton, "Speech to the IISS 11 November 2008." (2008)

⁶¹¹ Former UK Force Commander in 2003, in: *Operations in Afghanistan - Oral Evidence Hc 554ii*, q.69; Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan."

being formed. During stages 3 and 4 of NATO's expansion process, whereby British forces took over the Helmand province, the aim of providing security was adapted to the changing context. In 2006 and 2007 the security assistance to the Afghan government was transformed to operational support to Afghan Security Forces (ASF), and the UK took a more active role in order to '....build Afghan National Army and Police capacity....'. This with a view to enable the ASF to take over the responsibility for security in the '....medium term....', without committing to any firm dates.⁶¹² The use of British forces was not only envisaged to be limited to indirect assistance, as the Ministry of Defence saw the need for British forces to be prepared to actively defend the PRT in the new and less benign area of operations in Helmand.⁶¹³

The aim of improving security through the use of British force and supporting the build-up and the operations of the ASF increased in importance as the true extent of the Taliban insurgency in the Helmand province became visible. During the Parliamentary hearings following the initial deployment, the aim of providing security was interpreted by the Defence Committee as one of the two main purposes of the British operations in line with the purpose of denying the Taliban and the AQ the ability to operate on Afghan soil. Although the Secretary of Defence chose different words and related the security objective to the extension of Afghan governance, the role of the security aim *vis-a-vis* an overall purpose and other aims did not appear clear.⁶¹⁴ Towards the end of the period, the aim of security became even more tied to the development and performance of the ASF. By late 2007 and 2008 the UK government was using the term *Afghanisation*, and the political aim of providing security was interpreted as meaning: 'Helping the Afghans take responsibility for their own security.'⁶¹⁵ Enabling the ASF to operate on their own was a part of the security aim throughout, but if one compare the statements of the Secretaries of State prior to the Helmand deployment with those given by the Secretary of State two years later, there is an increased emphasis on enabling the ASF rather than having British forces providing the actual security.⁶¹⁶ The political aim of assisting the Afghan governments in

⁶¹² Memorandum from the MoD in: *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 46.

⁶¹³ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁴ Compare: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, p. 43 and ev.p. 1.

⁶¹⁵ Hutton, "Speech to the IISS 11 November 2008," p. 3; Gordon Brown, "Hc Debate 12 December 2007," ed. House of Commons (London:2007), Col. 303.

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providing security therefore changed throughout the period from the aim of providing low key assistance via taking on the responsibility for the actual security, to the aim of actively assisting the ASF units. This development of the objective during the period becomes more evident when compared to the development immediately after the period, where in 2009 both the British PM and his AfPak policy further developed the aim towards *Afghanisation* and further towards mentoring and partnering the ASF rather than provide security through British forces.⁶¹⁷

Governance

Another objective that was corollary to the general aim of assisting the Afghani government was the aim of strengthening the Afghan government structures and improving governance and democratic structures. The objective of improved governance was initially not communicated in detail, but described in general terms and linked to the general aim of assisting the Afghan government and other objectives such as improving security and enhancing the Afghan government's ability to counter the opium production.⁶¹⁸ The objective of improved governance as communicated between 2003 and 2005 did not discuss the relationship between the central, regional, or local levels of government, or the limits of democracy in Afghani culture. Despite this lack of specifics, the British government spearheaded the development of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT), and alongside the Americans and Germans developed PRTs before NATO took over responsibility in August 2003. The British forces established PRTs in the Northern provinces of Mazar e-Sharif in 2003 and in Maymaneh in 2004.⁶¹⁹ By stage 3 of NATO's expansion of its AOR, the objective of improved governance and democratisation was emphasised and linked more clearly to the objectives of security and reconstruction, and in turn the objective was linked to the overall aim of assisting the Afghan government. The objective of improved Afghan governance and democracy was communicated as the determinant of British strategy as the Minister of the Armed Forces argued that: '[t]he strategy is to create the conditions where, effectively, we allow for good governance to take place....', and the Secretary of State argued that in the end the ability to improve Afghan governance was key to all

⁶¹⁷ "Transcript of Speech and Q and a Given by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on Friday, September 4 2009."; HMGovernment, "UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Way Forward," p. 9.

⁶¹⁸ Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan." (2004)

⁶¹⁹ House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, *Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, 2 August 2009, p. 82.

other objectives; security, reduction of opium production, and creating socio-economic development.⁶²⁰

After the Helmand deployment, the objective's role was adjusted. Whilst it was seen as the determinant of the British strategy in Helmand in 2006, the role of governance took more of a backseat to the challenges of establishing security in the province. In the aftermath of the Helmand deployment, the British aims of security, governance and reconstruction were discussed in light of a comprehensive approach. This was of course a result of the challenges that the British security forces had faced in the Autumn of 2006 and early 2007, but it was also linked to a more precise description of the objective itself. The experience of regional governance in Helmand made the new Secretary of State elaborate on the objective and made it clear that the improvements in governance and democracy had to be based on local requirements and consent, '...despite its shortcoming in Western eyes.'⁶²¹ This more precise and somewhat reduced interpretation was carried on in the Prime Minister's Afghanistan speech of 2009, where he emphasised the local aspects of the governance rather than the general. The more modest role of improving governance was also evident in the 2008 National Security Strategy, where the objective of improving governance in complex conflicts such as Afghanistan was seen as part of an overall strategic logic. The NSS saw the objective of governance as part of the action to prevent the main threats of counterterrorism through the CONTEST-'strategy', and actions to prevent the effects of failed states.⁶²² The objective of governance went through a transformation and redefinition during the period: from a general and unspecific objective to the determining element of British strategy in Helmand, and towards the end of the period one of the many elements in an overall political and strategic logic subordinate to the overall aim of assisting the Afghan government.

⁶²⁰ Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006."; Minister for Armed Forces Adam Ingram in: *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 24 and.

⁶²¹ Secretary of State Des Browne in: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 1.

⁶²² HMGovernment, "The National Security Strategy: Security in an Interdependent World," pp. 27 and 36.

Reconstruction and development

The third objective associated with the broader aim of assisting the Afghan government was the aim of contributing to the reconstruction and development of the war-torn country of Afghanistan. Development and reconstruction may be seen as two distinct processes, but throughout the period the British government appeared to treat them as one objective, and I have followed suit.⁶²³ The objective included a vast range of socio-economic initiatives in order to assist the Afghan government and could therefore be seen as an objective subordinate to the overall aim of assistance to the Afghan government.⁶²⁴

The objective of reconstruction and development was in theory a part of the British portfolio of aims and objectives from the start of the NATO involvement. The small British PRTs in Northern Afghanistan that preceded NATO's takeover were tasked with assisting the regional authorities with reconstruction and development efforts, but given the limited forces and resources available in 2003 and 2004, the efforts were '....modest...'.⁶²⁵ The objective was not given emphasis until late 2004 and 2005, when the British government decided to increase its involvement in Afghanistan. The objective was by then not clearly articulated by the British government, but communicated in terms of intent or aspirations.⁶²⁶ As with the other objectives related to the aim of assisting the Afghan government, the emphasis on reconstruction and development increased with the decision to deploy British forces to Helmand. In the run-up to the deployment, the Secretary of State argued that the deployment was focused on reconstruction and pledged that £1 million would be made available for reconstruction purposes. Indeed his reasoning was that the security detachment was to protect the PRT, which was to operate in a less benign area than previously in Northern Afghanistan.⁶²⁷ The precise relationship between the objective of reconstruction and other objectives was not always clearly communicated. Although the security efforts were to be tailored to the needs of reconstruction, and the reconstruction efforts were to focus on developing alternatives to the drug based economy, the Ministry of Defence simultaneously saw the PRT's main effort as

⁶²³ *Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, p. 82; See: Gordon Brown, "Gordon Brown in House of Commons Debate, December 12, 2007," (London: House of Commons, 2007), col. 305.

⁶²⁴ "Gordon Brown in House of Commons Debate, December 12, 2007," cols. 306-07.

⁶²⁵ UK Force Commander in: *Operations in Afghanistan - Oral Evidence Hc 554ii*, q. 69.

⁶²⁶ See: Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan."

⁶²⁷ Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006." (2006)

focusing on police reform, brokering local cease fires, and other governance related activities.⁶²⁸

The pre-Helmand hearings also revealed a tension in the British thinking between the objectives of providing security for British troops through QIPs that would provide short-term goodwill, and the more long-term reconstruction efforts.⁶²⁹ The experience in Helmand throughout 2006 and 2007 revealed this lack of clarification between the objective of reconstruction and other aims and objectives, and illustrated that the political objective of reconstruction was not sufficiently precisely communicated and articulated to constitute a platform for actual strategy; or in other words, who does what, where, when and how. The post-Helmand deployment hearings in the Defence Select Committee revealed tension between the long-term development projects and the short-term security related QIPs.⁶³⁰ However, the lessons of the first Helmand deployment appear to have made the British government clarify the balance inherent in the objective and emphasise the long-term rather than short-term development, as the Secretary of State Browne argued in the hearings that the British government was spending more on long-term than short-term projects.⁶³¹ This reinterpretation of the reconstruction and development objective was also evident in the redevelopment of the British strategy that took place in 2007 and 2008. In late 2007, the Prime Minister argued for an interpretation of the objective in line with long-term development rather than QIPs as envisaged two years earlier, while the 2008 NSS argued for the same and only saw the need for short-term reconstruction projects in specific instances, and then only in co-operation with civilian actors.⁶³²

Other aims: Counter- narcotics

The communicated British aims were for the most part in line with the aims of ISAF and the aims of the other coalition partners. However, the strategy of the UK was also determined by political aims which were linked directly to British domestic concerns rather than the coalition aims. The best example of the pursuit of particular

⁶²⁸ Second MoD report in: *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 49.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁶³⁰ *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, p. 37.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, ev.p. 2.

⁶³² and HM Government, "The National Security Strategy: Security in an Interdependent World," p. 39; Brown, "Hc Debate 12 December 2007," col. 303.

British interests in Afghanistan was the controversial aim of reducing the opium production in Afghanistan. As seen in the case of the Netherlands, the UK was not alone in its aim of reducing the opium production in Afghanistan, but during the years 2004 to 2007 the UK stood out in its emphasis of the importance of counter-narcotics, in its direct link to domestic concerns and how it influenced British strategic behaviour.⁶³³

Throughout the period of 2003 to 2008 the UK was the G8's lead nation in counter-narcotics. Initially, the problem of narcotics was seen as a part of the context of the conflict in Afghanistan, and a factor in the funding of the Taliban. In 2003, the British ISAF forces did not see counter-narcotics as their main task, as this was carried out by other actors.⁶³⁴ This public stance on counter-narcotics changed in 2004 as the aim of reducing opium production was elevated from the context of the Afghanistan conflict to becoming an active, albeit unclear, element in British strategic behaviour. In 2004, the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, explained that his ambition was to '...put counter-narcotics at the heart of all our work in Afghanistan.'⁶³⁵ Reduction of opium production was thought to be central to the realisation of other political and strategic aims, and was seen as the most pressing problem in Afghanistan. To Straw, the opium production and trade had deeply troubling humanitarian consequences and constituted an obstacle to the socio-economic development in Afghanistan. The opium and heroin trade was seen as detrimental to the wider security situation in Afghanistan beyond its role as a source of funding to active insurgents and furthermore, the opium trade was a source of regional instability.⁶³⁶

This increased focus on counter-narcotics was not only a question of public communication.⁶³⁷ The increased focus on counter-narcotics from 2004 also influenced UK strategy more directly. During the ISAF expansion, the UK chose in 2005 to hand over its two PRTs in the Northern Provinces of Mazar e-Sharif and Maymaneh to Sweden and Norway respectively, as well as its QRF assigned to RC North. The UK instead decided to realise its political aims by taking on the responsibility of the Southern province of Helmand. The decision to emphasise the South and particularly

⁶³³ See Robert Fox in: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 34.

⁶³⁴ Former British Force Commander in: *Operations in Afghanistan - Oral Evidence Hc 554ii*, q. 69.

⁶³⁵ Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan."

⁶³⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶³⁷ Minister of the Armed Forces Adam Ingram in: *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 22.

the Helmand Province, rather than the North or the larger and more important Kandahar Province, was based on the idea that the UK could ‘....make a difference in supporting the counter-narcotics effort....’. As further underscored by the Ministry of Defence in 2005, it was in the British interest to make that difference because ‘[t]he province is in the heartland of the narcotics trade, with more opium poppy cultivated there annually than in any other region in Afghanistan.’⁶³⁸ Thus seemingly, the aim of counter-narcotics was elevated in importance *vis-à-vis* other aims such as counter-terrorism, as the government argued it was no longer ‘.... terrorism, but the cultivation, processing and distribution of opium products that is the greatest threat to Afghan security.’⁶³⁹ The aim of reducing the opium production and narcotics trade, albeit not central to the British political aims, appeared to be elevated in importance and directed where and how force should be employed, and thus, it may be argued that it was a factor influencing British strategy between 2004 and 2006.

Following the operations in Helmand from the summer of 2006 and into 2007, the aim was reduced in its importance in relation to other aims and objectives. Whereas the Foreign Secretary in 2004 argued for placing counter-narcotics ‘at the heart’ of British Afghanistan efforts and the Ministry of Defence in 2005 argued for counter-narcotics as one of the two deciding reasons for involving British forces in Helmand, by 2007 and 2008 the political aim of reducing the opium production was not mentioned as a central aim, but had reverted to a role as one of many objectives explaining the context of the insurgency and its funding.⁶⁴⁰ By late 2007, the political aim of reducing the narcotics trade was seen as linked to the overall aim of stability and assistance to the Afghan government.⁶⁴¹ Naturally, the ambitions also changed. Whereas the rhetoric of 2004 through 2006 employed terms as ‘stamp out drugs’ and ‘taking the senior players out’, by 2007 and 2008 the terms had changed to those of containment and reduction.⁶⁴² The aim of reducing the opium production had been reduced in importance and its contents altered.

⁶³⁸ MoD report to Select Defence Committee in: *Ibid.*, ev. p. 46, para 12.

⁶³⁹ First MoD memo in: *Ibid.*, ev.p. 47.

⁶⁴⁰ Hutton, "Speech to the IISS 11 November 2008." (2008); HM Government, "UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Way Forward," p. 13.

⁶⁴¹ Brown, "Gordon Brown in House of Commons Debate, December 12, 2007," col.306.

⁶⁴² *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 22; HM Government, "UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan: The Way Forward," p. 13; Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan," p. 7.

The changing fortune of the political aim of counter-narcotics was clearly a result of events on the ground. In 2004 through 2006, British forces were to assist in and directly support the eradication efforts.⁶⁴³ By 2007, it became clear that the high ambitions in the field of counter-narcotics were counter-productive *vis-a-vis* other aims such as strengthening Afghan governance and security. The eradication efforts were seen as counter-productive at the tactical and even operational levels, as the eradication policy increased local discontent and ‘... was fuelling the insurgency.’⁶⁴⁴ The British forces were keen to distance themselves from the actual eradication process. In fact, and according to the Select Defence Committee members British troops handed out leaflets where they distanced themselves from the eradication efforts in order to remain on good terms with the local communities. The Ministry of Defence was reluctant to let British troops participate in eradication operations unless the efforts to create alternative livelihoods were effective.⁶⁴⁵

In 2009, a year after the end of this study, the Prime Minister completed the turnaround regarding the aim of counter-narcotics when he used the aim as an illustration of the difference between the vital aims and the lesser objectives: ‘Attacking the heroin trade, while a worthy objective, is not, of course, the fundamental reason why we are in Afghanistan.’⁶⁴⁶

The alliance aim:

The political purpose and aims discussed so far were all communicated during the period to some degree by the British government. The final political aim affecting British strategy that will be discussed is paradoxically a purpose or aim that was not expressly communicated by the British government; whether maintaining ties with the US or NATO was an important part of British strategic behaviour. Norway was explicit about using force in Afghanistan to support its purpose of strengthening ties with the US and NATO, whereas the Netherlands saw itself contributing to a broader international order. The UK did not deal directly with the question, but as this was questioned several times during the period, I have thus decided to include it in this study.

⁶⁴³ Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006," Col. 1531.

⁶⁴⁴ Mr Adam Holloway, MP in: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 18.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, ev.p. 71 and p. 40.

⁶⁴⁶ Brown, "Transcript of Speech and Q and a Given by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on Friday, September 4 2009."

Although the beginning of the British involvement in Afghanistan was seen as support to the US following the attacks in 2001, the British government did not publicly state that its NATO operations in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008 were guided by a political purpose or aim to uphold the alliance with the US, or maintain NATO as a relevant security actor.⁶⁴⁷ In none of the official documents, hearings or relevant speeches were these aims listed as guiding British strategy during the period, although vague declarations of common values and history were given.⁶⁴⁸ Even when confronted directly on the subject, the British PM, Gordon Brown, did not agree that the maintenance of alliances influenced its strategy in Afghanistan.⁶⁴⁹ This official line was questioned as important British strategic theorists challenged the official reasoning. Strachan argued that maintenance of the alliance with the US was not only an aim, but the entire purpose behind the British involvement in the Afghanistan conflict: 'Britain is in Afghanistan for the same reason that it took part in the invasion of Iraq: the Anglo-American alliance is the cornerstone of British foreign and defence policy.'⁶⁵⁰ Michael Howard's line of reasoning was similar when he confronted the PM on the subject, and argued that the UK would commit forces to Afghanistan as long as the conflict mattered to the US.⁶⁵¹ Theo Farrell argued along similar lines when he maintained during the Foreign Committee's hearings that one of the main reasons for the British involvement '...is to support our relationship with the United States,...' and it was therefore important for the British troops to perform well and convince the Americans of their worth.⁶⁵² To Anatol Lieven, the maintenance of transatlantic relations was evidently part of any country's decision to use force in Afghanistan.⁶⁵³ This raises the question of whether a discussion of what the British government intended with its use of force is complete without this aim; and further why the maintenance of the transatlantic relations did not feature prominently on the list of British political aims and purposes?

⁶⁴⁷ Blair, "Coalition against International Terrorism, House of Commons Debate 4 October, 2001," col. 673.

⁶⁴⁸ See for instance the Foreign Affairs Committee's extensive list of purposes and aims in: *Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, pp. 82-83.

⁶⁴⁹ Brown, "Transcript of Speech and Q and a Given by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on Friday, September 4 2009," p. 13.

⁶⁵⁰ Hew Strachan, "The Strategic Gap in British Defence Policy," *Survival* 51, no. 4 (2009): p. 51.

⁶⁵¹ Michael Howard, question to PM Gordon Brown in: Brown, "Transcript of Speech and Q and a Given by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on Friday, September 4 2009," p. 13.

⁶⁵² Professor Theo Farrell in: *Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, ev.p. 9.

⁶⁵³ Lieven, "Afghanistan: An Unsuitable Candidate for State Building," p. 483.

The insistence of not seeing transatlantic relations as the purpose or even one of the aims behind the strategy of the UK during the period may be explained by the factors of popular support and how the strategic establishment in Britain views itself. Throughout the period Britain was under strong criticism of simply following the lead of the increasingly unpopular Bush-regime in the US. Publicly stating, as other countries did, that one of the main determinants behind British strategy was to maintain or strengthen ties with the US would have encouraged stronger domestic criticism of an already unpopular foreign and security policy. This explanation does not explain all aspects of the question because the US foreign policy was at least as unpopular in other countries. Instead it appears that the explanation could lie in the more active and independent role that the UK saw itself playing in Afghanistan and the region. As pointed out by the CGS General Staff General Dannatt, the UK was not just any country in Europe but ‘...perhaps uniquely placed among the European nations to deliver global influence to prevent conflict through military capacity building and strategic partnering.’ Moreover, unlike other European nations, the UK still saw itself as a main player on the international scene, and this role was ‘...hardwired into our political and national DNA.’ The UK had to accept a different role than other European nations, and according to Dannatt this was not ‘...”punching above our weight” but I would suggest it is “operating commensurate with our responsibilities”.’⁶⁵⁴ The UK saw itself as an independent actor in Afghanistan with its own policies and strategies that were in line with the US’ but was still independent.

This view of British political purpose, aims and strategy as independent compared to the other states of the alliance also is strengthened when one examines how the UK related to the aim of maintaining NATO as a relevant security organisation. Whereas the two other states saw its use of force in Afghanistan as a means to strengthen the NATO-alliance and to make NATO relevant as a security organisation, the British view was somewhat different in its execution. The British decision to partake in NATO’s stages 3 and 4 was clearly influenced by the potential failure of NATO’s operations in Afghanistan as it was perceived to run ‘...out of fuel...’ after stage 2 in 2004.⁶⁵⁵ The British involvement in stage 4 was thus in support

⁶⁵⁴ Dannatt, "The Challenge for Defence in the Next Decade " p. 5.

⁶⁵⁵ General Fry in: House of Commons Defence Committee. Operations in Afghanistan: Fourth Report of Session 2010-2012, Volume I, 2011, ev.p. 87.

of the NATO-coalition, and as in the two other cases it was also an attempt to get the USA involved in Afghanistan after the Iraq-invasion had taken most of the US' attention after 2003. The two aims of supporting NATO and getting the US involved were seen as intertwined as stages 3 and 4 would involve the US further than its narrow focus on counter-terrorism would allow in 2004.⁶⁵⁶

The difference between the UK and the two other cases was the way the UK sought to influence the NATO-coalition. Throughout the period of 2003 to 2008, the British position was that of making the other NATO-countries, and thus the alliance, to increase their share of the burden and to fit in with British aims. This became evident during the NATO expansion where the UK handed over its Northern PRTs to Sweden and Norway, in order to focus on its own deployment into the Helmand province.⁶⁵⁷ Even as early as the pre-deployment hearings, members of the Defence Select Committee questioned whether other NATO countries were willing to apply enough force and that the British would have to take on '....the dangerous missions....', and although the Ministry of Defence officials were reluctant to name specific countries they shared the concern.⁶⁵⁸ After the first year in Helmand the British government actively lobbied for more countries to remove restrictions on their troops and to provide more forces to the British-led sectors. The British role of persuading and coaxing other members to improve its efforts became more pronounced as PM Gordon Brown explained to the House of Commons that he was '....urging them [other NATO members] to look at innovative ways to burden share....', and to provide more troops and resources to Afghanistan.⁶⁵⁹ Particularly from 2005 and onwards, the UK sought a leading role in NATO's Afghanistan operations and, in support of the US and NATO, attempted to make other coalition members increase their commitments and to follow British policy and strategy. The UK's involvement in the coalition, although not consistently communicated, was thus based on the same desire to strengthen NATO as in the two other cases, but it sought to do so by pursuing a more active policy, commensurate with its view of its role in NATO, *vis-à-vis* the other members.

⁶⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵⁷ Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006," (2006),. col 1530

⁶⁵⁸ *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.pp. 10-12.

⁶⁵⁹ Brown, "Gordon Brown in House of Commons Debate, December 12, 2007," col. 306.

2) Were the Political Purposes and Aims Adapted to the Nature of War, the Character of Complex Conflicts and Coalition Warfare?

The discussion and description of the British purposes and aims have provided an understanding of what the British government intended to achieve with its use of force in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008. The next step in this study of British strategic behaviour is to analyse to what extent these purposes and aims were adapted or suited to the nature of war, and to the character of complex conflicts and alliance warfare.

The British purpose and aim through the period can be described as:

OVERALL BRITISH PURPOSE	COMMUNICATED: DENYING RADICAL ISLAMISTS IN THE FORM OF AQ AND THE TALIBAN ACCESS TO AFGHAN SOIL.		NOT COMMUNICATED: MAINTAINING THE US ALLIANCE AND NATO- COALITION?
	COALITION AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:	INDEPENDENT BRITISH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:	
POLITICAL AIMS OF A HIGHER ORDER	ASSISTING THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT AND EXTENDING ITS REACH	COUNTER- NARCOTICS	
POLITICAL OBJECTIVES OF A LOWER ORDER	ENABLING ASF TO PROVIDE SECURITY		
	IMPROVED GOVERNANCE AND BUILDING DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES		
	RECONSTRUCTION, DEVELOPMENT		
	DDR, UNTIL 2005		

Adapted to the nature of war: Instrumentality?

The question of whether these British purposes and aims were adapted to the nature of war first of all addresses the fundamental question of instrumentality in strategy, that is, did the British purposes and aims provide a clear direction for the use of force in Afghanistan?

As noted previously, there was no shortage of political aims and objectives, but to what extent and how did these provide direction for the strategy? The British purposes, aims and objectives in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008 did not present a clear, instrumental logic where the purpose, ends and means were tied together throughout the period. The overall purpose of denying access to Islamic radicalists was not emphasised during the first two years of the NATO operations, instead other ambitions were fronted by the British government such as governance, reconstruction, and DDR. It appeared that the overall purpose was there, but it was not communicated properly as the starting point of a strategic ends–means relationship. The strategic logic behind the British (and NATO) use of force was not illogical, but on the other hand it was not self-explanatory. Given that the purpose was to deny access to radical groups and prevent terrorism from Afghan soil, establishing a centralised Afghan state was not the only means available to realise this purpose. The purpose could have been realised through various forms of less ambitious denial actions, or by establishing other forms of governance in Afghanistan. By not emphasising its purpose and how it related to the ends and means, the British government failed to establish a proper logic for that could explain its strategy. This has been pointed out on an overall level by Hew Strachan who argued that British defence policy after 2001 lacked ‘....a “strategic narrative”, a plan against which the events in Iraq and Afghanistan can be set; which relates setbacks as well as successes to an overall strategic vision; and which is adjusted against the realities of war.’⁶⁶⁰

Strachan saw the lack of a clearly communicated strategic logic as explaining the lack of public support and interest in British defence policy; however the lack of a strategic logic also had more tangible effects. The lack of a strategic logic based on purpose, ends and means whereby some aims were superior to others also impacted strategic decisions and actual military operations once Britain increased its efforts in Southern Afghanistan in 2005 and 2006. Although the original purpose of denying

⁶⁶⁰ Strachan, "The Strategic Gap in British Defence Policy," p. 61.

radical Islamists access to Afghan soil resurfaced in 2006, there was confusion as to how the different aims and objectives related to one another. The initial deployment of British troops in Helmand was based on a population centric counter-insurgency strategy where the central triangle of the province was to be secured and to be the focus of governance and reconstruction efforts. The relationship to the overall aim of assisting the Afghan regional government was not clarified as the British forces quickly found themselves required to deal with the security concerns of the newly appointed governor of the province, which required significant numbers of combat troops to be redirected to the North of Helmand leaving the PRT without enough troops further South.⁶⁶¹ The British Commander, Butler, was confronted by requirements from two separate political aims, that of assisting the Afghan regional government and that of securing the PRT's governance and reconstruction efforts. Only when the decision had to be made did it become clear at force level that the former aim in practice trumped the latter objective. Although the aim of supporting Afghan authorities became the main aim, this in turn led to the main problem of British strategy in Helmand, that of the dispersal and the subsequent overstretch of the available British forces. The issue of overstretch was noted by the Select Committee in 2006, but once the initial plan of concentration was abandoned it was difficult to find a suitable remedy to the problem of too many tasks and too few troops.⁶⁶² Although British operations in late 2007 and 2008 tried to concentrate its efforts, the problem of holding ground with the available troops remained throughout the period of this study.⁶⁶³ In comparison to the Netherlands, the problem of balancing the desired ends with the available means was not realised as early, and the political and military leadership were not as willing to accept the consequences of the mismatch between the ends and the means.

Furthermore the relationship between the objectives of establishing security, which was to be the task of the combat troops, and those of governance, reconstruction that were the responsibility of the PRT, was not firmly understood or clarified. In the run-up to the deployment there was no clarification as to whether reconstruction activities were to support the security operations with QIPs, or whether

⁶⁶¹ Fergusson, *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, pp. 159-60; cfr: *Global Security: Afghanistan and Pakistan*, p. 85.

⁶⁶² *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, p. 22ff; *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev. p. 94.

⁶⁶³ King, "Understanding the Helmand Campaign: British Military Operations in Afghanistan," pp. 315-17.

the security operations were there ‘....to create the conditions where, effectively, we allow for good governance to take place.....’⁶⁶⁴ The relationship was described by the Secretary of State: ‘In helping Afghanistan, we cannot look to resolve just one of those issues. Everything connects.’⁶⁶⁵ The problem was that this analysis did not function as a clear, instrumental strategic logic in resolving the practical priorities that emerged on the ground. There were disagreements between the different military commanders and between the civilian and military officials as to how everything connected in practice in Helmand.⁶⁶⁶ This is not to say that the problem could have been solved at that stage, but that the political purpose and aims were not clearly communicated and the relationship was not clear during the initial planning.

The lack of a clearly communicated and prioritised strategic logic was also evident with respect to the role of counter-narcotics in Helmand in 2006 and 2007. As shown previously, although never the central purpose or aim for the British government it nevertheless played an important role in British strategy between 2004 and 2007.⁶⁶⁷ The aim of counternarcotics influenced the government’s decision to direct the British use of force towards the Helmand province, and not towards the strategically more important province of Kandahar as well as other provinces.⁶⁶⁸ The aim was part of a strategic logic in so far as it tied in with the overall purpose of denying access to radical Islamists and attacked an important part of the funding of terrorist activities as well enabling more transparent and reliable governance, but it was based on the idea that opium production was a greater threat than the actual insurgency in 2006.⁶⁶⁹ In practice, the aim was in direct contradiction to the objective of establishing security and forged alliances between the insurgents and the drug traffickers and exacerbated the security problem in the province.⁶⁷⁰ As a result, the Ministry of Defence altered the aim and only supported the eradication of opium fields

⁶⁶⁴ Minister Adam Ingram in: *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 24.

⁶⁶⁵ Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006," col. 1529.

⁶⁶⁶ Fergusson, *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, pp. 176-79.

⁶⁶⁷ Tootal, Colonel Stuart. *Danger Close*. London: Hachette UK, 2009, p. 25.

⁶⁶⁸ First MoD memorandum in: *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 46.

⁶⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, ev.p. 46.

⁶⁷⁰ Report from ADIDU in: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 116.

in closer conjunction with reconstruction efforts to provide alternative livelihoods which later became the main interpretation of the aim.⁶⁷¹

Thus, the British political purposes and aims between 2003 and 2008 struggled from the outset to provide instrumentality for the use of force. The logic connecting ends and means was at times unclear and the different aims were not clarified in themselves or in relation to one another.

Adapted to the nature of war: Unpredictability and reciprocity in strategy?

The political purpose and aims of British strategic behaviour in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2008 cannot only be discussed in relation to whether the purpose and aims were sufficiently instrumental. The question is also whether the strategic purposes and aims were adapted to the changing fortunes that are part of any armed conflict and the very nature of war. Strategy cannot only be seen in the light of the aims set forward at the onset of a conflict; equally important is that the political direction and instrumentality during the war can be adapted to the changing conditions on the ground and that there is reciprocity between the aims and the means in the development of strategy.

The factor that more than any other contributes to the unpredictability in war and demands flexibility in political purpose and aims when developing and maintaining strategy, is the fact that force is used against and in relation to human adversaries.⁶⁷² For political aims to direct strategy and be adapted to the nature of war or conflict, the aims must take into account the uncertainty and unpredictability of the human actors involved in the conflict and allow the actions of adversaries or enemies to influence its purpose and aims. The British political purpose and aims of the period between 2003 and 2008 appeared not to be designed with this perspective in mind. The Afghanistan conflict was and is a confusing conflict with a multitude of different adversaries, actors and enemies, and developing political aims taking this multitude of possible actors into account was extremely difficult. From 2003 to 2005, the British political aims did not

⁶⁷¹ Compare: *Ibid.*, p. 40; Brown, "Transcript of Speech and Q and a Given by Prime Minister Gordon Brown in London on Friday, September 4 2009," p. 9.

⁶⁷² Clausewitz and Hahlweg, *Vom Kriege : Hinterlassenes Werk*, pp. 97-98 and 186-87.

relate to any particular opponents. The political aims appeared to be prepared to encounter developmental problems and societal problems, but there is little evidence that the political aims were designed with the perspective of an organised and willed counteraction in mind.⁶⁷³ This was of course understandable given the apparent calm in Afghanistan during the 2003 and 2004, however, the lack of emphasis on a human adversary was also evident during the British preparation for the expansion into Helmand in 2005 and 2006. During the planning for the Helmand operations there was a certain focus on both the Taliban and so called 'bad elements' constituting a security threat towards the British deployment, but these groups appeared to be part of the environment rather than opponents that would actively counter the British political aims.⁶⁷⁴ It was not that the development of British political aims did not envisage that there would be threats to British forces, such a threat was clearly expected, but there was little evidence that the political aims, and thus the strategy deriving from it, saw this threat as coming from a determined enemy with a will of its own, reacting to and actively countering the British use of force.⁶⁷⁵

It may be argued that not emphasising an adversary so not to legitimise or overplay the insurgent's cause was in line with the basic principles of counter-insurgency operations. However, the adversary was not absent from the context of the British political aims and purpose. Instead, the Taliban and the 'bad elements' were throughout the period described in contemptible terms, and not seen as an enemy in the strategic sense of the word.⁶⁷⁶ The lack of incorporating a reacting foe when developing the British political aims and purposes was illustrated during the Autumn of 2006 and spring of 2007, when the Taliban launched their counter offensive in Northern Helmand forcing the British forces to react and then abandon their initial priority of securing the central part of the province first.⁶⁷⁷ Instead of conducting a population centric counter-insurgency campaign between Lashkar Gah and Gereshk, the British security forces were forced to spread its forces into the more sparsely

⁶⁷³ Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan." (2004); See: *Operations in Afghanistan - Oral Evidence Hc 554ii*, q. 69.

⁶⁷⁴ Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006." (2006); Minister Adam Ingram in: *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 24.

⁶⁷⁵ "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006," col. 1530.

⁶⁷⁶ See: Hutton, "Speech to the IISS 11 November 2008," p. 1; Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan," p. 1.

⁶⁷⁷ Fergusson, *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, p. 22.

populated areas of Sangin, Now Zad and Sangin where the Taliban had the initiative.⁶⁷⁸ A year later, the new Secretary of State admitted that the British political aims and strategy had not taken into account that their adversaries would react to British operations in Helmand. During the 2007 Defence Committee hearings Des Browne admitted:

*I think the obvious lesson that was learnt, and I have spoken about this before publicly, was that the Taliban reacted to our presence in a way that had not been expected in terms of the violence and the nature of the way it deployed the troops.*⁶⁷⁹

This failure appeared to have been corrected to some extent during the years of 2007 and 2008. During the last two years of the period, the British government, whilst maintaining its previous rhetoric, appeared to view its adversaries as thinking actors rather than just a part of the scenery. Defence secretaries Browne and Hutton as well as Prime Minister Brown included considerations about how Britain should relate to the enemy, and how the enemy could react to British strategy after 2007. The British political purpose and aims between 2003 and 2006 and thus British strategy were insufficiently attentive to the fact that Britain's aims and purposes were to be developed into a strategy against adversaries with a will of its own who would react to the British use of force. Having experienced the effects of an enemy able to react and thwart its plans in 2006 and 2007, there was a marked shift towards understanding that the British political intentions were pitted against an unpredictable human adversary.

British strategic behaviour during the period suffered severe criticism, however, it is important that the criticism forwarded against British strategic behaviour in Afghanistan does not adopt a static point of view. An analysis of the British case should also include to what degree the purpose and aims were adapted and adjusted after the initial problems became evident. Not all criticism of British strategic behaviour took into account the changes in the British political purpose, aims and objectives that took place between 2006 and 2008. Prior to 2006 the British operations in Afghanistan were conducted in the shadow of the much larger commitment to Iraq, and the emphasis on Afghanistan and the political purpose and aims appeared to be low. However, from the planning of the British involvement in ISAF stage 3 enlargement which started in earnest in 2005, the focus on the purpose, aims and objectives and

⁶⁷⁸ T. Farrell and S. Gordon, "Coin Machine," *The RUSI Journal* 154, no. 3 (2009): p. 20.

⁶⁷⁹ *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 2.

their precision and co-ordination increased. This work accelerated as soon as the troops were deployed on the ground, came in contact with a determined enemy, and were confronted by the problems of co-ordinating British military efforts with those of the regional government and other civilian actors. From 2006, the political purpose and intent was significantly clarified in relation to the operations in Afghanistan and the relationship between mutually inconsistent aims was harmonised.

The interesting aspect to this study is that many of the changes appeared to be initiated from the ground level and then corrected through the chain of command. One example was the British policy on opium where the British government's active efforts to eradicate the opium production in Helmand changed as a result of the experiences of British troops facing the challenging task of carrying out Hearts and Minds operations while simultaneously depriving the local population of an important livelihood. By 2007, the British policy on opium had been altered as a result of changes instigated at ground level and then adopted by the British political level.⁶⁸⁰ Similarly, the aims of governance and reconstruction underwent significant changes with respect to the balance between short-term and long-term reconstruction, as well as co-operation between civilian and military actors in the field. The confrontation with a determined enemy in 2006 and 2007 also led to changes in the political direction and relationship between the Foreign Office, the DFID, and the military forces on the ground, including how the PRT and the security forces operated.

Finally, throughout the final two years of this study the political aims and objectives in Afghanistan were incorporated into an overall structure of British policy documents which included a National Security Strategy, a joint Afghanistan and Pakistan strategy, as well as a counter-terrorism strategy.⁶⁸¹ The criticism of British strategy is of course correct to the extent that these aims could have been corrected prior to the operations commencing, and that many of these problems could have been predicted. However, the fact that the British strategy organisation between 2006 and 2008 showed that it was able to adapt and change its political aims and its strategy when faced with operational challenges showed there was increased reciprocity

⁶⁸⁰ "Coin Machine," p. 21; *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 71.

⁶⁸¹ HMG, "The National Security Strategy, 2008; UK's Strategy for Countering International Terrorism, 2009, and UK Policy in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

between the ends and the means. A similar change in strategic behaviour was not apparent in its Norwegian counterpart, indicating that the British strategic behaviour, whilst imperfect, showed signs of improvement towards the end of the period.

Adapted to complex conflicts?

The final question on how the British political purpose and aims were adapted to the conflict relates to the challenges of complex conflicts and coalition warfare. The first years after the British deployed troops to the NATO operation, there was no discernible focus on distinct adversaries and no particular emphasis on the type of intensity displayed in the conflict. The threats and challenges were described in terms of socio-economic and societal problems.⁶⁸² The threat against which the political aims were developed between 2003 and 2005 thus appeared to be one of multifunctional peacekeeping, where force in the NATO context was to be applied against political and societal threats, rather than against actively fighting insurgents. This is understandable, given the low level of opposition activity during the first years of the NATO deployment, particularly in the area of Kabul where most British forces were deployed. On the other hand, even during the relative calm of the first two years British and NATO forces were attacked on the outskirts of Kabul on several occasions through a combination of asymmetric threats such as IEDs and ambushes. Although many ambushes took an asymmetric form as far as means and methods were concerned, some ambushes displayed the opponents' willingness to hold ground and fight it out even as close to Kabul as the Lowgar province and the Surobi district of Kabul. As early as 2004, there were signals that the conflict in Afghanistan displayed the variety of intensity found in complex conflicts.

As the NATO expansion gained traction in stages three and four, in the South and the East, the question of the threat facing the British troops became more acute. During the preparations for the British deployment into Helmand in early 2006, the British government appeared to realise that the threat level was very different from what it had been in Kabul and in the North. This was understood in relation to complex wars in general as well as the specific situation of Helmand.⁶⁸³ In his statement to the House of Commons, the British Secretary of State for Defence John Reid argued that the threat against British troops was 'greater' which was precisely why he deployed

⁶⁸² See: Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan." (2004)

⁶⁸³ John Reid, "The Challenges of Modern War," (King's College London: KCL, 2006).

elements of the 16th Air Assault Brigade to secure the British PRT in Lashkar Gah.⁶⁸⁴ Although Reid later made a comment that he would be pleased if British troops did not have to fire a single shot in Helmand, it appears clear that the British political aims and subsequent strategy were certainly prepared for a greater threat to British troops.⁶⁸⁵ The British government was also prepared to counter the greater threat with more troops, as Secretary Reid made clear earlier the same year: 'What matters is that we put the right forces in to do the job and to do it safely and well, and I make no apology if that requires more soldiers than some people initially envisaged.'⁶⁸⁶ What was not expected was the reaction from its main antagonist, the Taliban, and the nature of the reaction. The lack of an enemy in relation to the political aims has been described above, but it appeared that the development of British political aims and strategy did not fully anticipate the composite threat and the different levels of intensity utilised by its opponent in Helmand. As the British forces deployed into Helmand in the summer and autumn of 2006 they were not only confronted by an enemy whose dispositions they had not accounted for, they were also surprised by the level of conventional intensity that confronted them as they reacted to the Taliban offensive in Northern Helmand. The British deployed one of their most combat ready units into Helmand, but the nature of the enemy action was not anticipated when the political aims and the strategy were developed. As pointed out a year later by John Reid's successor, Des Browne, the intensity anticipated from the Taliban was not a hybrid one, but a purely asymmetrical one in the shape of a classic guerrilla campaign. The Secretary of State argued that:

*....the accepted wisdom was that we could expect a reaction from the Taliban and, indeed, possibly from others but that the nature of it would be what people refer to as asymmetric. We were being advised by all the experts that that would be the nature of the way in which they would deploy their violence. It turned out that they did not.*⁶⁸⁷

The British view of the threats and intensity in 2006 was not the same as the previous years. Thus, arguing that the British political aims and strategy was developed in a peacekeeping mindset does not appear to be precise.⁶⁸⁸ The British government appeared fully aware of the increase of the threat in Helmand, and that kinetic force

⁶⁸⁴ "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006," col. 1530.

⁶⁸⁵ D. Betz and A. Cormack, "Iraq, Afghanistan and British Strategy," *ORBIS* 53, no. 2 (2009): p. 326.

⁶⁸⁶ Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006," col. 1532.

⁶⁸⁷ Secretary of State Des Browne in: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 3.

⁶⁸⁸ Farrell and Gordon, "Coin Machine," p. 20.

was needed to counter it. What was missing was the understanding that the threat would come in the form of both low and high intensity simultaneously, and being able to adjust the British strategy accordingly.

The second aspect of complex conflicts that the British political purpose and political aims in Afghanistan should be analysed against, was the drawn-out nature of such conflicts and the tendency of contemporary conflicts not to be concluded in a definitive manner. The purpose and aims behind the British strategy in Afghanistan appeared to stress the longevity of the campaign that the UK had embarked on. Throughout the period the purpose and aims were always presented in an open-ended context, where no step in itself was seen as a deciding factor. The British aims were presented in the context of expressions such as ‘....for the long haul....’ and that the British government was fully committed.⁶⁸⁹ Furthermore, the British government was prepared to back up these statements by reinforcing its troops when needed, something the two other states were not prepared to do.⁶⁹⁰

On the whole, the British political purpose and aims seemed to be so focused on the long-term aspects of the campaign that it was difficult to find any evidence of any measurement of success or any quantification of achievement. The purpose and aims of the UK, and thus its strategy, were in many ways mostly ‘aspirational’ and not defined in relation to what a situation on the ground could possibly have looked like.⁶⁹¹ The British focus on a long-term commitment indicated resolve, and a profound understanding of the realities of contemporary conflicts, but its long-term commitment was not matched by an ability to create realistic and practical aims attainable by military force.

Adapted to coalition warfare?

The final aspect of the discussion on British political purpose and aims against the requirements of contemporary complex conflicts is the question of how the British

⁶⁸⁹ Hutton, "Speech to the IISS 11 November 2008." (2008); Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan." (2004)

⁶⁹⁰ Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006," col 1532; Brown, "Gordon Brown in House of Commons Debate, December 12, 2007," col. 304.

⁶⁹¹ Shirin Akiner in: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 98.

intent in Afghanistan was adapted to the fact that contemporary and complex conflicts are conducted in a multinational and multi-functional setting. As pointed out in the chapter two, interventions in contemporary conflicts are almost inconceivable without a coalition of countries providing international legitimacy for an operation. The UK gained significant experience from multinational operations during the 1990s in both PSO and intervention operations. Still, this experience did not prevent the political aims and strategy of the UK from running into significant challenges *vis-a-vis* its allies in Afghanistan. The complexity of the problem appeared to have been larger than the British experience during the 1990s and the experiences of Northern Ireland and colonial counter-insurgency had prepared British planners for. The multitude of international partners appeared to be a challenge to the British way of thinking and to surprise even experienced British security analysts and strategists.

The British political aims did not take the relationship with its Afghan host fully into account when dealing with the aim of creating security at the province level. A primary example emerged early on during the British deployment in May and June 2006. Immediately preceding the deployment the British authorities worked with President Karzai to replace Governor Akhunzada with a new and less corrupt governor, Daoud, whose support in Helmand was limited, but who was seen as better suited to the British aims of governance in Helmand. The challenge was that, in contrast to the similar Dutch move, Governor Daoud had limited support locally and could not support the British scheme of manoeuvre as the Taliban's offensive in Northern Helmand became evident. This meant that the original counter-insurgency based scheme of manoeuvre in central Helmand was discarded in favour of Governor Daoud's need to protect the Northern villages against the Taliban offensive.⁶⁹² Although the political aims and strategy were adjusted during 2007, the problems of co-ordinating with the Afghan government at operational level persisted throughout the period, as the command structures of the British forces did not match the local government who did not have corresponding levels. Similar problems occurred in relation to its NATO allies, where the shared battle space between the British troops and American troops under Operation Enduring Freedom command created friction. During the first years the friction was relatively low, but after the British political

⁶⁹² Farrel, Theo in: House of Commons Defence Committee. Operations in Afghanistan: Fourth Report of Session 2010-2012, Volume I, 2011, ev.p. 23, and Tootal, Colonel Stuart. Danger Close. London: Hachette UK, 2009, p. 35

ambition and strategy shifted its focus towards Helmand, the friction between US and British forces became evident.⁶⁹³ Although the main bulk of US forces came under NATO command late in 2006, the problem appeared to persist with reports of the problem being filed during operations Herrick 6 and 7. Furthermore, the British political aims and the subsequent strategy resulted in disagreement between the US forces with respect to the operational choices during the autumn of 2006.⁶⁹⁴

The challenges of adapting the political intent and the strategy to that of a complex conflict were also evident when it came to other NATO countries. Although the initial British aim was to support NATO in light of a impending crisis in 2003, just as the other two states, it became evident during the Helmand deployment that the British aims, objectives and ways were not entirely in line with the rest of the NATO countries. This was evident in the differences between the discussions before and after the Helmand deployment. In early 2006, the other NATO countries were discussed only in so far as their willingness to contribute, but from late 2006 and into 2007 it became clear that the various coalition countries approached the mission in Afghanistan differently.⁶⁹⁵ By 2007 opposition members of the Defence Committee were concerned that the behaviour of some NATO-countries amounted to freeloading compared to the British effort.⁶⁹⁶ Furthermore, the members of the armed forces reported operational problems between British forces and adjacent allies and problems of accommodating different states' agendas within the theatre.⁶⁹⁷

In Britain's defence, it can be argued that the problem of burden sharing in NATO is an eternal challenge and the emphasis on increasing the participation of other members was hardly unfair given the British commitment. Furthermore, there was scarce evidence of the British challenges with coalition operations being critical; indeed for every report of problems, there is a report praising the co-operation between Britain's Danish, Dutch and Canadian partners.⁶⁹⁸ However, the increased criticism and the inter-operational problems evident after the Helmand deployment indicate that the British aims, and objectives were not fully tuned to the multinational and coalition

⁶⁹³ Fergusson, *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, p. 123.

⁶⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 164-65.

⁶⁹⁵ Reid, "Statement on Afghanistan, House of Commons Debate 26 January 2006," col. 1530.

⁶⁹⁶ *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 71.

⁶⁹⁷ "Unpublished Post Operational Interviews," (2008).

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

aspects of the complex conflict of Afghanistan. The British experience of counter-insurgency was relevant when designing the UK's strategy but the British government had not fully understood the complexities of operating in a coalition, as the British ISAF commander David Richards lamented:

*When asked to compare others in my position people often mention Templar in Malaya. Well, he was in charge of a single nation's campaign there, and basically he ran it; he did not really have to go and ask anybody.*⁶⁹⁹

The British strategy was designed without taking the complexities of developing a political purpose and political aims in a coalition setting fully into account. The political purposes and aims of complex conflicts did not only demand a multinational approach to realise them. Given the socioeconomic and societal ambitions of the UK in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008, the British purpose and aims were to be realised by more than military forces.⁷⁰⁰ From 2003 to 2006, the British government operated its Department for International Development (DFID) with a small staff in Kabul to work alongside other British efforts. The British government included elements of DFID in its development of the political aims and made DFID part of the actual operational planning prior to the Helmand deployment, and more importantly made DFID see itself '....as part of a wider HMG strategy in support of Helmand.'⁷⁰¹ This illustrated that the political aims of the UK were partly designed with the complexities of contemporary conflicts in mind, similarly to that of the Netherlands, and diametrically opposite to the Norwegian Model. However, whilst the ambition was to design the political aims and to develop a strategy with more than military forces in mind, from 2006 and onwards the political aims were difficult to realise through the use of multiple agencies. The ambitions were hampered by the lack of a commonly accepted doctrine (see below) streamlining the various agencies, creating tension between the MoD, FCO and DFID on the ground in Helmand as the strategy was to be enacted.⁷⁰²

As mentioned earlier, the political aims of reconstruction and democratisation were difficult to harmonise between the short-term needs of the security forces and the

⁶⁹⁹ General Richards in: *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 46.

⁷⁰⁰ Straw, "The Challenges Ahead for Afghanistan." (2004)

⁷⁰¹ DFID, "Evaluation of Dfid's Country Programmes: Afghanistan 2002-2007," (London: DFID, 2009), p. 8.

⁷⁰² "Unpublished Post Operational Interviews."

long-term needs of the DFID and the NGOs. This problem revealed the problem of who was to set the pace and direction for the development and reconstruction in the British sector.⁷⁰³ As a result, DFID received criticism for its efforts in the Helmand province during 2006 and 2007, particularly for its inability to provide enough resources and personnel to provide long-term development in an insecure environment.⁷⁰⁴ The challenges of defining political purpose and aims in the context of a multi-agency setting was obviously more demanding in 2006 and 2007 than the British government had envisaged. However, as with the overall problem of adapting the political aims and objectives to the actual operational environment, the British government demonstrated a willingness to deal with these problems as well as flexibility in its approach. The experiences of 2006 and 2007 were included in the 2008 NSS, where an increased emphasis on interagency co-operation was emphasised, and the problem of deploying enough competent civilians into a combat zone was improved.⁷⁰⁵ The UK demonstrated a commitment to the idea of an integrated and comprehensive approach, in that the FCO and DFID had to be an integrated part of the solution in implementing British strategy in Afghanistan between 2003 and 2008. In comparison to the two other states of this study, this integration went a lot further than in Norway and by the end of the period brought it at least on par with the Netherlands, who encountered much less opposition in its province.

3) The Organisation of the Strategic Process

The structure and integration

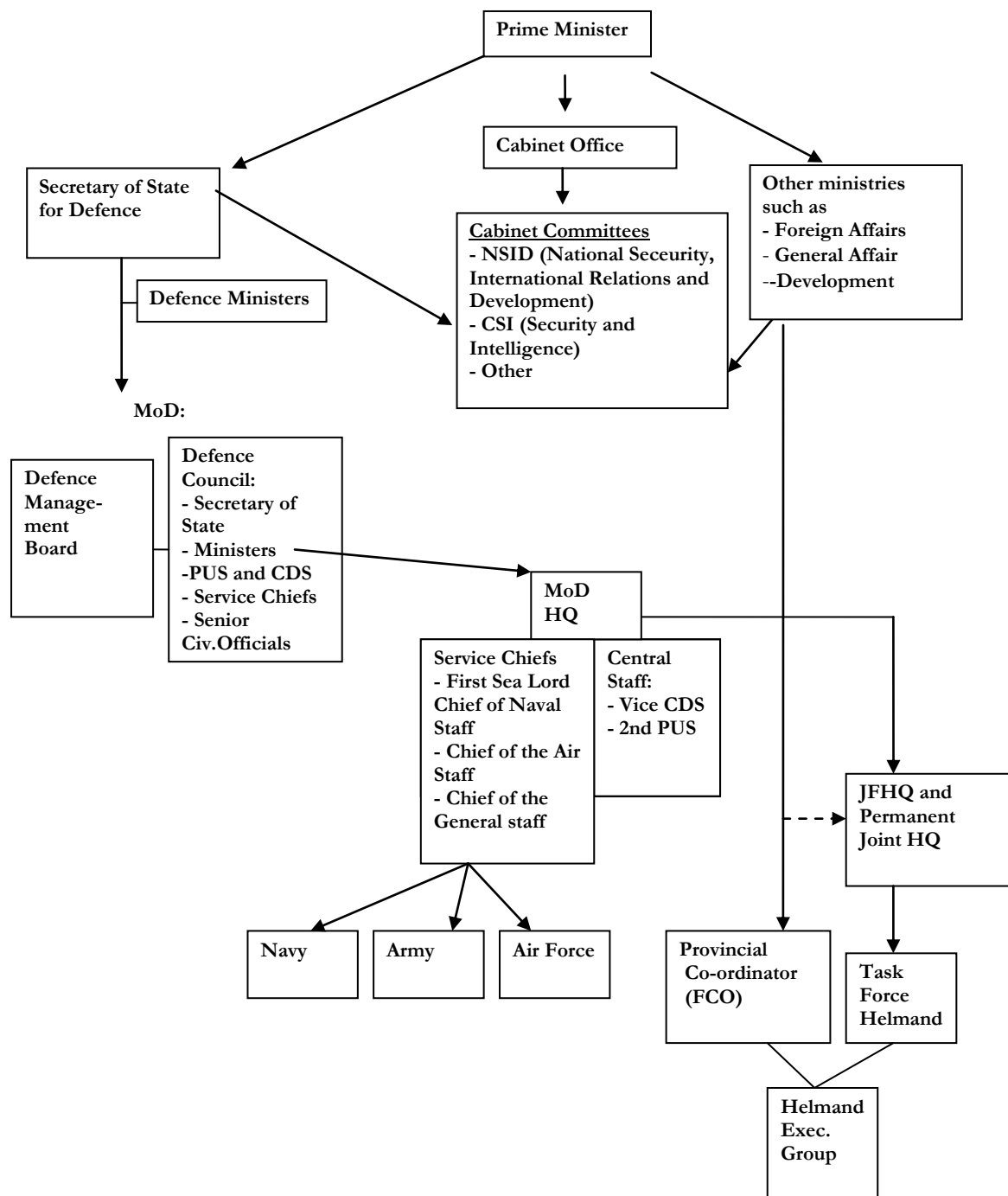
The organisation of developing British strategy was important in understanding the strategic behaviour of the UK. The organisation of the strategic process in the UK during the period was characterised by a structure that in theory appeared well designed to deal with the challenges of making strategy in Afghanistan, but in practice the actors involved struggled to use the structure, and interact in a manner that was conducive to developing a coherent strategy.

⁷⁰³ *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 12.

⁷⁰⁴ Prof. Philip Wilkinson and the Senlis Council in *Ibid.*, ev.pp. 88-89.

⁷⁰⁵ HMGovernment, "The National Security Strategy: Security in an Interdependent World."

Figure: *The organisation of the strategic process in the United Kingdom:*



As in the two other parliamentary democracies of this study, the responsibility of developing strategy resided with the PM and their cabinet. Compared to the Netherlands, the PM had few constitutional restrictions *vis-a-vis* the legislature apart from maintaining support in Parliament, a support that was solid throughout the period. On the other hand, one of the significant differences between the UK and the

two other cases was the active role of the legislature when it came to oversight of British strategic behaviour. The British Parliament, through its system of Select Committees, had a far more active role in than its Norwegian and Dutch counterparts. The two Select Committees on Defence and Foreign Affairs carried out a series of hearings throughout the period, hearings that dealt with all aspects of British strategic behaviour prior to, during and after the use of force in Afghanistan. Despite the fact that there was no serious opposition to the British involvement in Afghanistan as such, the hearings were substantial in their analysis of the various British deployments during the period. The British deployment during NATO's stage three enlargement were subjected to hearings by the Defence Select Committee in early 2006 as the plans were being developed, as well as a hearing in 2007 a year after the initial deployment, and followed up its hearings with visits in the field. These hearings were done in parallel to the Foreign Affairs Committee which carried out its own hearings relating to British foreign policy. The role of the Committees was nevertheless limited to that of oversight, and although the recommendations were surprisingly direct and frank, their findings did not have a direct impact in the decision-making process, and the committees could not force the co-operation of the executive but relied on its co-operation.⁷⁰⁶ The hearings nevertheless created an arena for a discussion on British strategy and alternative approaches which was totally absent in Norway, and heavily politicised in the Netherlands. The role of the parliamentary committees was thus a positive one with respect to clarifying British ends, means and ways in Afghanistan, but the organisation of the committees into separate fields of government meant that an overall perspective on Afghanistan was difficult to attain.

Although the legislative took on an active role during the period, it had no constitutional tools with which to impact the strategy. The executive thus played by far the most important role in the organisation of British strategy. The executive structure was one of separate ministries in charge of their respective fields meaning that the strategy in Afghanistan was an effort that required the co-operation of the PM and his Cabinet Office (CO) and the various ministries. The Cabinet Office had a defined role in co-ordinating '....the objectives and activities...' of the ministries, similarly to the role ascribed to its Dutch counterpart and in contrast to the Norwegian organisation.⁷⁰⁷ The inter-ministerial co-operation was co-ordinated through a system of Cabinet

⁷⁰⁶ Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil–Military Relations after Iraq," p. 78.

⁷⁰⁷ JDCC, "The Comprehensive Approach," ed. JDCC(Shrivenham: JDCC, 2006), para: 103.

Committees that from its inception was designed to be flexible and suit each government's needs as to composition and level of involvement.⁷⁰⁸ The most important committee was that of the Cabinet Committee of National Security, International Relations and Development (NSID) which was established in its most recent form in 2007.⁷⁰⁹ The CO and NSID was a result of conscious effort during the period to improve the co-ordination between the actors involved in policy and strategy making. The UK was one of the driving forces in NATO in improving this co-ordination through efforts such as the Cross-Whitehall Working Group, the Governing Well Committee, and the British Military's doctrinal efforts of Effects Based Approach and its military brainchild the Comprehensive Approach. The structure and ideas on how to co-ordinate government policy and strategy were thus advanced compared to the two other cases, but this does not explain why the UK struggled to implement a co-ordinated strategy during the period, in particular during the first year of the Helmand deployment.

One of the problems was the lack of detailed political involvement in the making of strategy prior to 2007. Although the structure was available, the government level did not appear to use the organisation to provide clear political direction for the use of force. Instead, the political level provided general and aspirational aims without getting involved in how the aims were to be reached. Secondly, the level of inter-ministerial disagreement and competition was greater than the structure and the ideas behind it envisaged. The ideas on co-ordination were to some extent MoD driven, and the FCO and DFID did not fully agree with all aspects of the concept, particularly the permeation of military concepts in a plan that was to include a large civilian component.⁷¹⁰ The result was that the strategic and operational levels were provided political aims that were not integrated as the planning was to commence, and that the relationship between the different ministries was more competitive than constructive. The challenge of co-ordinating government actors was a result of real disagreement, but it was also a result of rivalry and opposing cultures. As in Norway, the history of inter-ministerial co-operation was weak, and the ministries were protective of their traditional fields of interest. Both the CO and FCO blocked initiatives for integration

⁷⁰⁸ Broadbent, *The Military and Government: From Macmillan to Heseltine*, p. 104.

⁷⁰⁹ HMGovernment, "The National Security Strategy: Security in an Interdependent World," p. 5.

⁷¹⁰ Andrew M Dorman, "Transforming to Effects-Based Operations: Lessons from the United Kingdom Experience," (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute US Army War College, 2008), p. 48.

and were sceptical towards initiatives that would reduce their traditional roles.⁷¹¹ DFID was accused of having developed a culture where it saw itself as ‘...an international aid organization...’ rather than an instrument of state power, and naturally struggled to transform itself into an actor that could take part in an integrated strategy.⁷¹² Between 2003 and 2006 the structure at the government level was obviously struggling to avoid the stove piping that became the desired solution in Norway. During the first year in Helmand the structure did not provide the integrated policy required. Towards the end of the period, however, both the structure and the interaction moved significantly in the direction of a comprehensive approach. The co-ordination between the ministries in London, as well as in the field improved with the establishment of the Helmand Executive Group (HEG) which organised the relationship between the ministries, and reduced some of the friction between the different actors.⁷¹³ This co-operation in turn led to the development of the Helmand Road Map which attempted to balance ends and means on the one hand with civilian and military efforts on the other. By 2007, the FCO and DFID had accepted the concept of a comprehensive approach, and committed its personnel into an integrated structure in Helmand with the FCO providing the Provincial Co-ordinator as head of the PRT.⁷¹⁴ The strategic organisation thus changed significantly in respect to inter-ministerial co-operation during the period.

As in the two other states, the actual transformation of political aims into military objectives revolved around the MoD. The British MoD was an integrated organisation with a joint political and military leadership. The increased integration leading up to the Nott-reforms was a model for the two other MoDs, in particular the 2003 Norwegian organisation was inspired by its British counterpart. The MoD during the period of this study was headed by the Minister of State for Defence and supported by four politically appointed functional ministers to provide political leadership, and was to develop defence policy and constitute the senior military HQ in Britain.⁷¹⁵ The political leadership had two principal advisers, the Permanent-Under-Secretary (PUS) as the head of civil servants, and the Chief of the Defence Staff, the head of the Armed Forces. Their respective vice chiefs, Vice Chief of Staff Defence Staff and 2nd PUS,

⁷¹¹ Korski, "British Civil-Military Integration - the History and Next Steps " pp. 17-18.

⁷¹² *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 12; Dorman, "Transforming to Effects-Based Operations: Lessons from the United Kingdom Experience," p. 10.

⁷¹³ *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, pp. 37-38.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*, ev.pp. 74-75.

⁷¹⁵ Ministry of Defence, "Organisation," MoD.

headed the MoD HQ through their positions as heads of the central staff. The MoD HQ (but not the central staff) included the three service chiefs who were responsible for the Army, Navy and Air Force. The ministry was managed through a series of committees of which the Defence Council, which included political leadership, the PUS and CDS, and the service chiefs, was the most important.

The British model of organisation was designed to centralise and assert political control, as well as to centralise military advice in the hands of one military adviser. The integrated model in the UK grew out of the idea that it is difficult to separate purely political and military tasks when developing strategy, and as such the design was in line with the theories of Clausewitz and the civilian supremacist school of civil-military relations.⁷¹⁶ The civilian supremacist school clearly advocates political involvement in the development of strategy for the purpose of civilian control, but it is sometimes overlooked that the purpose of civilian control is also to develop effective strategy.⁷¹⁷ In the UK, as in the two other states, the integration of the MoD was driven by the desire to cut cost and control spending. The desire to improve the organisation's ability to make strategy was not first on the agenda.⁷¹⁸ The integration reforms of the 1980s and 1990s were influenced by management theory, not strategic theory.⁷¹⁹ This was also evident during this period, where the MoD's own publications described its role in such management terms as conducting 'corporate planning', 'allocation of resources', and 'performance measurement', and describing the Defence Council as the 'Corporate Board' of the MoD. Just as in the case of Norway and the Netherlands, the 2008 MoD publication did not focus on the MoD's tasks in terms of making and implementing actual strategy, but rather its managerial counterparts, that of providing 'leadership', 'strategic vision' and 'long-term strategic planning'. Although the CDS's task in the integrated MoD was to be the principal adviser in matters of strategy his role was not described as such, instead his role was described as providing input on '...policy, financial, administrative and operational matters.'⁷²⁰ The MoD's role in developing and implementing strategy was unclear, both *vis-à-vis* the other ministries and the committees, but also in relation to the permanent operational headquarters who was

⁷¹⁶ Broadbent, *The Military and Government: From Macmillan to Heseltine*, p. 107.

⁷¹⁷ Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil-Military Relations after Iraq," pp. 66-67.

⁷¹⁸ Broadbent, p. 198.

⁷¹⁹ Hew Strachan, *The Politics of the British Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 259.

⁷²⁰ Ministry of Defence, "Organisation".

planning and directing the actual operations in Afghanistan.⁷²¹ A major challenge was therefore, to distinguish who in the organisation was charged with the development of strategy and also who was in charge of implementing it.

Compared to the two other states in this study the structure of the integrated MoD had a more pronounced military involvement. As in the two other states, the CDS was designated the principal military adviser, but he was on equal footing with the principal civil servant, not subordinate as in the Netherlands and in Norway. Furthermore, the service chiefs were involved at the top level of both the Defence Council and in the MoD HQ and still retained a right to access both the Secretary of State as well as the PM., whereas in Norway and the Netherlands, the service chiefs were only part of the CHOD/CDS' joint staffs. The organisation was thus theoretically well designed to generate the military advice necessary in the meeting between the political and military levels. Nevertheless, the question of whether military advice was adequately generated and given sufficient weight in British strategy was subject to severe criticism during the period of this study. Using the Clausewitzian model of strategy, military advice should assist in how the political intent may be realised through the use of military means. Military advice is to balance the political intent against the realities of the actual conflict, which presumably the military forces know more about than politicians, and balancing the relationship between political ends and military means. As illustrated in the previous chapters, British strategy during the period struggled to adapt its political intent to the character of the conflict, particularly the reaction of its enemy and the question of whether enough British forces were deployed and whether they were adequately organised to realise the political objectives. Whether these deficiencies were caused by the lack of military advice provides the question of whether there was military advice in the first place, and secondly whether it was given sufficient consideration.

To state that the case of the UK illustrates that there was a lack military advice provided, as was the case in Norway, seems somewhat off the mark. The British military had an elaborate doctrinal platform from which to form its advice, and had plenty of operational experience to draw from during the ten years prior to 2003. Its operational plans in Afghanistan were well conceived, as was evident in its deployment

⁷²¹ Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil–Military Relations after Iraq," p. 65.

to Helmand in 2006, where the PJHQ designed a limited and integrated plan that appeared to address many of the later challenges before it was altered in August 2006. The problem was not that the British military did not have advice to give in the strategic process, but that the British military at the strategic level was not sufficiently involved in the development and implementation of strategy. Detailed military advice appeared to be limited to the operational level. During the Parliamentary hearings the actual Helmand strategy was presented by the armed forces minister and the chief of operations from the PJHQ, whereas the Defence Staff was involved in the overall aspects of force generation, C2 and RoEs.⁷²² This is not to say the Defence Staff's issues were unimportant or that the PJHQ's thoughts were irrelevant, but the PJHQ chief of operations answered questions of strategic nature such as the relationship between ends and means, and the way the military forces were to realise the political objectives.⁷²³

The hearings were of course controlled by Parliament and questions were decided by the Committee, however, this is still illustrative that the implementation of strategy was in the hands of the politicians and the PJHQ, whereas the Defence Staff dealt with co-ordination issues. This reinforces the criticism of Strachan, who during the period argued that the apparent strength of the military advice in the British organisation of the strategic process was largely illusory. Strachan argued that the prerogatives of the military chiefs were not used, and that neither the CDS' nor the chief's advice were included in the strategic process.⁷²⁴ This was confirmed by the chiefs themselves, who claimed that the right to be heard by the prime minister was rarely exercised during the period, and that the access to the PM was reserved for the CDS. CGS General Dannatt stated that he had only met with Tony Blair once in his term as CGS.⁷²⁵ A less quoted statement was Dannatt's description of his relationship with Gordon Brown. Although Dannatt criticised Brown for showing scant interest in military affairs, he nevertheless claimed to have met with the PM on three occasions during one month in 2009, indicating that the government did seek more military

⁷²² *The UK Deployment to Afghanistan: Fifth Report of Session 2005-06*, ev.p. 1ff, and ev.p. 21ff.

⁷²³ *Ibid.*, ev.pp. 27-29.

⁷²⁴ "War and Strategy," in *On New Wars*, ed. John Andreas Olsen, *Oslo Files on Defence and Security* (Oslo: Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies, 2007), p. 26.

⁷²⁵ Peter Biles, "Iraq Inquiry: Army 'Almost Seized up' in 2006," *BBC*, 28 July 2010.

advice from the service chiefs after 2007.⁷²⁶ The overall impression of the period was that military advice was centralised and dependent on the ability of the CDS to communicate it, an ability questioned by both Strachan and to some extent Dannatt. Furthermore, the impact of military advice appeared to be limited at the strategic level and replaced by military advice and implementation at the operational level.

The centralisation of the military advice and the parallel strengthening of the political control over the armed forces in Britain during the period did present some challenges. Although the need to maintain political control over the armed forces is a laudable desire, it is questionable whether an emphasis on control is always conducive to making good strategy. As argued by Cohen in his repudiation of Huntington's theory of objective control, political control in itself is not enough to produce effective strategy. Political control needs to be transformed into political direction and constructive engagement with military advisers, and it appeared that this constructive engagement was lacking at the strategic level in Britain.⁷²⁷ This was also the point of Strachan's criticism who argued that the politicians were too concerned with soldiers '...about to park its tanks outside Parliament' and that they had not understood that the main function of good civil-military relations was to produce good strategy.⁷²⁸ Strachan appeared to analyse the overall challenge correctly, that is, despite a theoretically adequate organisation, the British government struggled to involve its principal military advisers in its strategic decisions and involve them in the actual implementation of strategy. This study however, indicates that the cause of the problem in Britain, as well as in the two other states, did not lie in a misunderstanding of civil-military relations and a misplaced desire to keep generals out of politics, but rather a desire to manage the armed forces more efficiently. The MoD did not speak of political control but management efficiency; as in the two other countries in this study, the main focus was the management of resources efficiently and not to generate strategy or political control.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁶ Mark Tran, "Former Army Chief Attacks Government over Afghanistan Troops Request," *The Guardian*, 6 October 2009.

⁷²⁷ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, pp. 214-26.

⁷²⁸ Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil-Military Relations after Iraq," p. 66; "Want to Understand the War? Ask the Generals," *The Times*, March 17 2010.

⁷²⁹ Ministry of Defence, "Organisation".

The other challenge was the belief in the centralisation of the military advice. Given that the right of the chiefs to access the political leadership was illusory, the military advice would be channelled through the CDS alone. From a management perspective this meant a more efficient process, but it carried with it serious disadvantages from a strategic theory perspective. The system of centralisation of military advice meant that the political leadership did not allow itself to have a full range of alternative military advice, but was limited to what was generated through the chain of command and ‘...within the corridors of the Ministry of Defence,...’⁷³⁰ More recent studies of the process of making strategy indicate that allowing alternative and competing views from outside the formal structure to be examined benefits the process rather than harming it.⁷³¹

The organisation of the process of developing strategy in the UK was significant to its strategic behaviour. The organisation explains to some degree the challenges described in chapters 1 and 2, as the organisation struggled to co-ordinate the different actors within the government needed to develop an integrated strategy. Moreover, it explains why the political aims were not well adapted to the realities of the complex conflict of Afghanistan, particularly between 2003 and 2006. The efforts to improve the organisation after 2006 on the other hand illustrated the willingness and commitment of the British government and the actors involved to learn and change while the conflict was ongoing. Compared to the two other cases, the organisation of the process of strategy in the UK was characterised by its apparent suitability to develop coherent and relevant strategy. The organisation had a committee structure designed to co-ordinate the various government ministries and involve the PM through his Cabinet Office, as well as a fully integrated MoD with military officers involved at all levels. However, the lack of political-military engagement and inter-ministerial co-operation meant that the organisation was not utilised in the same way as in the Netherlands. Comparing the two organisations leaves the impression of the benefits of the Dutch insistence on clear roles and procedures. Strachan argued the importance on focusing on the organisation of the strategic process so as to have a ‘...default mechanism...’ against personal differences and lack of competence.⁷³² This study seems to warrant a step further, that is, to integrate the different elements of government, civil servants

⁷³⁰ Strachan, "The Civil-Military 'Gap' in Britain," p. 56.

⁷³¹ Feaver, "The Right to Be Right: Civil-Military Relations and the Iraq Surge Decision," pp. 123ff.

⁷³² Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil-Military Relations after Iraq," p. 76.

and military officers in making strategy requires not only a relevant organisation with clearly defined roles, it also requires set procedures and doctrines to ensure the actual participation and engagement of the required actors. This is further emphasised when one compares the empirical base of the civil-military relations and strategic theory with the realities of modern politics. Both Strachan and Cohen based their criticism of contemporary politicians and generals on studies of 'statesmen and generals', using empirical evidence from the days of Churchill, Clemenceau and BenGurion, all of whom had a lifetime of war and politics to draw on before they were charged with developing strategy. The reality of this study was that the average time in office for British defence ministers between 2005 and 2011 was little over a year: During the period of this study Britain went through four different ministers, all career politicians, none of whom had extensive experience in defence or security matters. This meant that although the UK went through only two Prime Ministers during the same time, there was a lack of continuity and experience in operating the organisation of making strategy. This high turnover and lack of specific expertise is nothing to lament over, instead theory must reflect practice and it appears that having a good organisation is no longer enough; the organisation of the process of strategy must be welded together by procedures and doctrines, because relying on personalities and structures is no longer sufficient.

4) Strategic Outlook

The UK's views of force and strategy

The strategic behaviour of the UK during the period was also influenced by its views of force and its utility. The beginning of the period found the British government expressing a firm belief that force was '....an essential part...' in realising its foreign policy and security objectives and its ability to use force was a '....vital component...' of its security policy.⁷³³ This belief in the utility of force was borne out by the apparent success of the British forces in the later stages of the Balkan conflicts, its experiences in Northern Ireland, as well as their responses to the emergencies in Sierra Leone, Kabul and Southern Iraq. Compared to the two other cases, the optimism of the British government about the utility of force was striking: Whereas Norway at best saw force

⁷³³ Ministry of Defence, "Delivering Security in a Changing World - Defence White Paper," ed. Ministry of Defence(London2003), pp. 2-3.

as a necessary evil only to be used when all other efforts were exhausted, the British government was ready to use force actively to bring about political change. The optimistic view of force was tied to the leading role that Britain saw itself as holding in Europe, but also its view of the conflicts and threats facing British interests during the early years of the period. The ability take lead of European coalitions and the British ability to use force effectively was central to maintaining Britain's position within Europe. Furthermore, Britain's outlook was one where direct threats to national interests were unlikely, but threats to international and regional stability elsewhere were imminent, and importantly, British force and forces could deal with such problems.⁷³⁴ The UK's position on the need to use force to maintain international peace and security was similar to that of the Netherlands, but the British view was more pronounced when it came to the utility of force and the need for Britain to be active in administering it. The same may be argued about the UK's views of the international organisations and force. During the early years of the period, the UK's saw the UN as central to the discussion on international use of force, but it was clearly sceptical to '...the limitations of the UN and the difficulties of translating broad consensus on goals into specific actions, particularly where proactive military intervention is concerned.'⁷³⁵ This was far from the Norwegian view, and also expressed the need for a more independent role *vis-à-vis* the UN than did the Dutch governments.

By the end of the period the British government had gradually changed its position from an initial optimism to a more subdued and conservative view. In 2008-2009 Britain developed its first National Security Strategy as well as a regional strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan. The view of force in these documents was in some ways a marked departure from the confident and optimistic view presented five years earlier. In 2008 the use of force was described as 'a last resort' in support of a 'value-based' approach to achieving security.⁷³⁶ Whereas the proactive use of force was seen as a cornerstone in 2003-4, the view in 2008 was more cautious and argued that 'preventive action' involving the international community and supporting vulnerable governments was the preferred way. This also meant a different approach to the UN. Whilst the early period described the limitations of the UN and the need for the UK to take unilateral action, the 2008 NSS argued for a 'rules-based approach to international affairs' and the

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷³⁶ HMGovernment, "The National Security Strategy: Security in an Interdependent World," p. 6.

need for Britain to use its powers to reform the organisation. The NSS admitted that situations could arise where Britain might have ‘...to deal with problems itself’, but this need was not linked to the failures of the UN and was provided at the end of a chapter as a series of exceptions to the general rule.⁷³⁷

A second marked development concerning the British use of force was the development of a multifunctional approach to security. Whereas the 2003-4 defence white papers made no mention of the use of other actors when it came to the use of force, the 2008 NSS argued for an integrated approach throughout, both domestically and internationally. It emphasised that ‘...security challenges require an integrated response that cuts across departmental lines and traditional policy boundaries’ and thus a need for all government actors to work together.⁷³⁸ The development during the period left a clear impression of change where the optimism concerning the use of force was replaced by a more reluctant and perhaps more realistic view of force, its utility and limitations. An explanation for the differences was of course the different scope of the documents. The early white papers were written by the MoD whereas the NSS was a cross-government effort including all actors within the government.

The increased emphasis on international law and integrated government response could be explained by the inclusion of the perspectives of the MFA, DFID and the Home Office. The change in the view of force could also be explained by the practical experiences of the period between 2003 and 2008. In 2003-4, the white papers argued that ‘[t]he Balkans, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, and Iraq demonstrate the successful performance of British forces....’ and proceeded to argue that these operations validated the British view of force laid out in the 1997 SDR.⁷³⁹ In 2008 the emphasis was still on Iraq and Afghanistan, but the conclusions drawn from these conflicts was not that they illustrated the utility of force but rather that ‘...our experience in Iraq and Afghanistan has shown, building stability out of conflict or state failure is a complex undertaking....’⁷⁴⁰ This experience was used to validate the integrated government approach that the NSS advocated, but also the need for a multifunctional approach to security where economic and societal measures were emphasised rather than the use of

⁷³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁷³⁹ Ministry of Defence, "Delivering Security in a Changing World - Defence White Paper," p. 2.

⁷⁴⁰ HM Government, "The National Security Strategy: Security in an Interdependent World," p. 37.

force. This was in turn linked to the Helmand Road Map of 2007 where this approach was attempted. The view of force and its utility thus went through significant alterations during the years between 2003 and 2008, and in many ways brought the British view closer to that of the two other states. This development helps explain the changes in the strategic behaviour of the UK in the period of this study.

Related to the question of force was the British understanding of strategy. Just as the British view of force and its utility underwent a development during the period that could be explained by the British experiences, the British understanding of strategy underwent significant changes between 2003 and 2008. Throughout the period the UK subscribed to the idea of grand strategy where strategy for the use of military force was seen in conjunction with strategies for other government activities. The 2001 British Defence Doctrine (BDD) used the grand strategy perspective as its point of departure for its discussion of strategy, policy and doctrine, and although the term was changed to national strategy in 2004, Britain remained committed to the overall idea of grand strategy.⁷⁴¹ The understanding of the implications of this choice, however, changed during the period, particularly in relation to the weaknesses of the grand strategy model.

In 2001, the BDD, ‘....the UK’s military strategic level doctrine,...’ began its discussion of strategy by classifying the different levels of war and described the role of military strategy in a grand strategy as. ‘....developing and employing military forces...’.⁷⁴² The BDD followed the traditional military school to understanding strategy, approaching it by classifying and distinguishing the different levels of military activities rather than trying to analyse the phenomenon itself. This initial approach was followed by the emphasis on principles of war and war-fighting ethos before the operational doctrines were described. This approach was akin to that of Jomini and Liddell Hart, and indeed, the 2001 edition of the BDD was thus not far from Liddell Hart’s original definition of military strategy, ‘....*the art of distributing military means to fulfil the ends of policy*’.⁷⁴³ The BDD did not address the challenges of its approach, and did not explore the boundaries and interaction between the political and military levels beyond a discussion of the relationship between policy, military strategy and doctrine. Although

⁷⁴¹ JDCC, "British Defence Doctrine," (Shrivenham: CDS, 2001), p. 1-2.

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 1.1-1.5; "Joint Operations," (Shrivenham: JDCC, 2004), p. 2-2.

⁷⁴³ Liddell Hart, *The British Way in Warfare - Adaptability and Mobility*, p. 63. (Emphasis in the original)

the BDD made a brief mentioning of Gray's model of strategy as a bridge '...linking policy and operational effect' and thus that strategy involved how military force was to realise political aims, it did not emphasise the practical aspects of strategy, the impact of an adversary, or its reciprocal nature. The BDD did not discuss in any depth the challenges of distinguishing military strategy from policy in a grand strategy approach or the challenges of balancing the various departmental policies. The BDD's approach to strategy also emphasised the links to the operational level and operational concepts rather than its link to policy, and argued that '...no Armed Forces [...] are more joint in their thinking.'⁷⁴⁴ On the other hand, the BDD did delve into the problems of overlap between the levels in contemporary conflicts, seeing them as '...almost an irrelevance...', yet the overall impression was that the BDD did not discuss strategy beyond a basic definition and as part of the levels of war.⁷⁴⁵

The ensuing doctrines followed the emphasis on classification and levels of war, but from 2004 it was possible to discern a subtle shift in the views of strategy. The 2004 doctrine on joint operations commenced with the BDD's levels, but then the subordinate doctrine quickly explored the concept of strategy in much greater detail. The JDP-01 deemed it necessary to analyse the relationship between national and military strategy, as well as the other elements of the national strategy. The JDP-01 defined the need for a national strategy framework, and proceeded to discuss strategy as process where a discussion on the balance between ends and means should lead to an integrated '...course of action.'⁷⁴⁶ It also adopted a more Clausewitzian approach to strategy where the measure of strategy and ensuing operations would logically be the integrated policy. The doctrine also included in its discussion of strategy a practical civil-military relations explanation to the challenges of modern politics and how this would shape the form of military advice. The difference in approach between the strategic level doctrine and the operational doctrine was noticeable, and although it took its cues from the BDD it also represented a noticeable shift in how the UK discussed strategy.

⁷⁴⁴ Major General A.A. Milton, "British Defence Doctrine and the British Approach to Military Operations," *The RUSI Journal* 146, no. 6 (2001): p. 43.

⁷⁴⁵ JDCC, "British Defence Doctrine," p. 1.4-1.5.

⁷⁴⁶ "Joint Operations," pp. 2.2-2.4.

The shift from the 2001 BDD was in many ways completed by the 3rd edition of the BDD published in 2008. The 2008 edition of the BDD kept the grand strategy approach but addressed a number of the weaknesses of Liddell Hart's concept. Firstly, its understanding of strategy was not tied to the levels, these were relegated to a chapter of warfare; instead the term strategy was immediately discussed in relation to policy. The new BDD followed up on the JDP-01's approach and saw strategy as an iterative process between politicians and military officers, rather than a handing down of instructions through a series of levels. The 2008 BDD in contrast to the previous edition emphasised the difference between strategy and policy and, obviously influenced by Strachan, argued that '[m]ilitary strategy is not simply another term for Defence policy.' The BDD took a step away from the emphasis on the operational level and saw strategy as providing the political '...meaning and contest to all operational and tactical actions.' Furthermore, in addition to discussing strategy in relation to ends and means, the 3rd edition discussed strategy as conducted against an opponent and this in turn meant that strategy '...evolves and adapts as circumstances change.'⁷⁴⁷ The 2008 BDD took a significant step in the direction of a Clausewitzian understanding of strategy that allowed for a more in-depth analysis of strategy and the relationship between the different actors. This understanding seemed to derive from a different understanding of war and conflict in general in 2008. Whereas in 2001 the BDD explained war in relation to a series of principles, the new BDD adopted Clausewitz's nature of war as its point of departure and only then introduced principles and operational concepts.⁷⁴⁸ The different approach to strategy towards the end of the period was to some degree also evident in the NSS. National strategies embody the essence of the challenges of the grand strategic approach as it attempts to co-ordinate many fields of policy. The NSS still embodied most of the criticism directed at the grand strategy concept, but although the NSS covered a plethora of issues ranging from climate change via imprecise threats such as poverty to the somewhat more tangible threat from Islamic terrorism, there was an undertone in the document that strategy was not a simple reiteration of laudable policy aims. Its aim was to find out '...how we will address and manage...' the threats, and although the document painted broad strokes it attempted to describe practical responses to the threats described.⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁷ DCDC, "British Defence Doctrine," (Shrivenham: CDS, 2008), pp. 1.3-1.4.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2.1-2.6.

⁷⁴⁹ HM Government, "The National Security Strategy: Security in an Interdependent World," p. 3.

UK doctrine

The British armed forces entered into the period with a comprehensive and internally coherent system of doctrines, covering all levels and forms of conflicts. The traditional British scepticism to doctrine was by 2003 a distant memory, as the British were the leading European nation in doctrine development during the period.⁷⁵⁰ This process was spearheaded by the centres for doctrine development, first the JDCC, later the DCDC, which developed a system of mutually dependent doctrines from the overall British Defence Doctrine, to the joint and operational doctrines tied in with the service doctrines on specific forms of operations. Compared to the two other states, the British system of doctrine was leaps and bounds ahead of Norway, and also ahead of the Dutch armed forces through its sheer breadth and depth of doctrinal work.

The challenge of British doctrine during the period was thus not one of availability and systematic thought, but direction. At the beginning of the period, the British armed forces were focusing on joint operations in the context of high-intensity warfare. Its focus was on operational methods and systems enabling its preference for manoeuvre warfare, but simultaneously spearheading the European development of EBO and NCW (EBA and NEC).⁷⁵¹ Both manoeuvre warfare and NEC were clearly developed in high-intensity context, and although EBA was seen as having relevance in low intensity and complex wars it was clear from the context of the EBA examples that it was primarily a concept for force-on-force military engagement. The cue for this development was of course taken from the US and NATO, but British doctrine development between 2003 and 2006 was not simply one of following the US, but also actively improving the concepts. The doctrine of EBA was developed into a new concept of comprehensive approach which was explained as the '...natural counterpart of the EBA,...' in order to include more effects than just military.⁷⁵² The British comprehensive approach as an idea was quickly accepted by other NATO countries and became the military counterpart to more civilian concepts such as integrated approach and whole-of-government approach.

⁷⁵⁰ Dorman, "Transforming to Effects-Based Operations: Lessons from the United Kingdom Experience," p. 23.

⁷⁵¹ Ministry of Defence, "Delivering Security in a Changing World - Defence White Paper," p. 3.

⁷⁵² JDCC, "The Comprehensive Approach," p. 1-8.

Compared the Netherlands, the link between the political level's view of force and the armed forces' doctrines was clearer in the UK. The emphasis on warfighting doctrines was linked to the optimistic view of force, as seen in the whitepapers of 2003-4. On the other hand the emphasis on high-intensity conflict and warfighting during the period also came from within the armed forces. Throughout the period the British armed forces stressed the importance of its 'warfighting ethos' and 'fighting power' in its doctrinal approach, maintaining that its forces' ability to '....develop and retain the physical and moral fortitude to fight' was 'essential' and 'fundamental' to British armed forces.⁷⁵³ This high-intensity focus of British doctrine was not a problem in itself; the question is how it impacted the strategic behaviour in the complex conflict of Afghanistan. The main challenges of British doctrine was that low intensity and complex conflicts were given relatively scant attention, the operational concepts were not adapted to the context of complex and low intensity conflicts, and that the fundamental focus on warfighting was to some degree counter-productive in Afghanistan.

Compared to the intense development of high-intensity doctrines between 2003 and 2007, there was no corresponding development in the field of low-intensity doctrines in Britain. The UK went into the period with fully developed counter-insurgency and PSO doctrines, but no new publications emerged until the counter-insurgency manual was slightly amended in 2007. The introduction of the counter-insurgency doctrine of 2001 was based on the British experiences with population centric counter-insurgency, but its operational practices were firmly linked to its warfighting and high-intensity doctrines, particularly manoeuvre warfare. The doctrine stated that although some aspects of conventional warfighting '....may become irrelevant in COIN' it still claimed that manoeuvre warfare could '....be readily adapted' to counter-insurgency, and made manoeuvre warfare the starting point of its chapter on operations.⁷⁵⁴ The same applied to the PSO-doctrine which was firmly linked to the principles of manoeuvre warfare and the warfighting ethos.⁷⁵⁵ Hence, the doctrines were not developed fully from the premise of low intensity or complex

⁷⁵³ "British Defence Doctrine," p. 3-4; DCDC, "British Defence Doctrine," p. 5-7; CGS, "Design for Military Operations - the British Military Doctrine," (London: CGS, 1996), p. 3-4.

⁷⁵⁴ "Army Field Manual - Part 10, Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)," ed. CGS (London: CGS, 2001), p. B-2-2.

⁷⁵⁵ JDCC, "The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations," (Shrivenham: JDCC, 2004), pp. A-7 and C-8.

conflicts, but were adapted to fit in with the high-intensity direction of other doctrines. The 2001-doctrine was not replaced until 2009, after eight years of counter-insurgency operations, indicating that counter-insurgency was not high on the agenda until the end of the period. The 2009-doctrine admitted that '[m]uch has changed since then [2001].' Whereas the 2001 doctrine had manoeuvre warfare as its operational point of departure, the new doctrine's operational tenets were drawn from classic counter-insurgency just as its American counterpart FM-3-24.⁷⁵⁶ The concepts of EBA were prevalent in parts of the new doctrine, but when explaining the fundamental aspects of insurgency and counter-insurgency operations, the doctrine relied on historical British experiences and classic counter-insurgency rather than conventional methods, and thus departed from the approach of its predecessor. Throughout most of the period, complex and low intensity conflicts were given less attention than its high-intensity counterparts and doctrines in the field were directly influenced by high-intensity doctrines.

The lack of attention to low intensity conflicts meant that the 2001-doctrine gradually was perceived as irrelevant and not up-to-date, with several British officers instead relying on the American doctrine until a new doctrine was published.⁷⁵⁷ The neglect of the peculiarities of low intensity conflicts and the corresponding emphasis on high-intensity methods meant that the overall doctrinal concept during most of the period would be described retrospectively by the CGS in 2009 as: '*Go Fast, Go First, Go Home*'.⁷⁵⁸ Influencing states such as Norway, the UK designed its doctrine to support rapid, forceful action, rather than the prolonged campaigns which characterised low intensity and complex conflicts in general and in Afghanistan. The experiences that shaped the overall view of force also shaped British doctrine between 2003 and 2006; the quick successes of Sierra Leone and the Balkans, and for that matter the toppling of the regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq, led British doctrine to neglect its low intensity experience and underestimate the impact and importance of long-term commitment. This neglect of the longevity of complex conflicts in British thinking was freely admitted in the 2008 NSS, which stated: 'Some aspects of our operational experience

⁷⁵⁶ CGS, "British Army Field Manual - Volume 1 Part 10, Countering Insurgency," (London: CGS, 2009), Foreword and pp. 3-1ff.

⁷⁵⁷ "Unpublished Post Operational Interviews."

⁷⁵⁸ Dannatt, "The Challenge for Defence in the Next Decade " p. 1.

since 2003 were not fully predicted, including the enduring nature of the operations.....⁷⁵⁹

The challenge of balancing the high-intensity thrust of the British doctrine with the realities of complex conflicts also became visible during the operations in Helmand from 2006 onwards. Although the 2006 PJHQ plan had some peacekeeping language in it, it also employed a classic coin-approach of securing the population within the central triangle of the province in order to facilitate governance-building and reconstruction. The deviation from this COIN-approach and the subsequent deployment and dispersal into the North was clearly influenced by Governor Daoud, and his need to maintain his standing in the province.⁷⁶⁰ However, this deviation from a traditional coin-approach also fitted neatly with the British armed forces' aggressive and active doctrine. The BDD and other doctrines' emphasis on the warfighting ethos, manoeuvre warfare and activity, appeared to have shaped the mindset of British officers into preferring operations akin to conventional force-on-force, rather than the cumbersome and slow population-centric approach.⁷⁶¹ The preference for kinetic action was reinforced by the choice of 16th Air Assault Brigade and later 3 Commando Brigade, units with aggressive cultures, as the carriers of British military strategy in Helmand.⁷⁶² The British doctrines made a conventional military approach more desirable from the perspective of the British military, an approach that made the original integrated and population-centric plan difficult to realise. British doctrine, and its lack of focus on complex and low-intensity conflict, therefore contributed to the challenges of the UK in Helmand.

The neglect of low-intensity British doctrine during the period is difficult to understand. During most of the period, British forces were involved in complex, low-intensity conflicts, and the British experiences meant that the British counter-insurgency doctrine was not all wrong when it stated:

⁷⁵⁹ HM Government, "The National Security Strategy: Security in an Interdependent World," p. 38.

⁷⁶⁰ *UK Operations in Afghanistan: The Thirteenth Report of Session 2006-2007*, ev.p. 14.

⁷⁶¹ Warren Chin, "Colonial Warfare in a Post-Colonial State: British Military Operations in Helmand Province, Afghanistan," *Defence Studies* 10, no. 1-2 (2010): p. 232.

⁷⁶² Fergusson, *A Million Bullets: The Real Story of the British Army in Afghanistan*, pp. 183-84; King, "Understanding the Helmand Campaign: British Military Operations in Afghanistan," pp. 325-27.

*[t]he experience of numerous "small wars" has provided the British Army with a unique insight into this demanding form of conflict.*⁷⁶³

Furthermore, as illustrated above, the political aims and objectives of the UK stressed the longevity of the British commitment in Afghanistan. The British doctrinal direction is perhaps best explained as a result of the overwhelming emphasis on the high-intensity doctrines that existed internationally and in Britain after 2000, as well as the leading role that the UK played in the development of making its concepts adaptable to those of the US. Moreover, the leading role that Britain played in military operations and in doctrine development during the early years of the period appeared to produce a degree of hubris within the armed forces, whereby they appeared to perceive themselves as having a natural grasp on complex and low intensity conflicts. British armed forces before 2006 claimed to have a 'unique insight' in counter-insurgency and had achieved success '...in so many other lower level operations....', and thus considered low intensity conflicts as less important to explore than warfighting.⁷⁶⁴ Lastly, the fact that British doctrine development was lopsided during the early years of the period and emphasised fast response as opposed to long-term operations, was further testament to the lack political involvement and detailed direction from the British government during the years between 2003-2006.⁷⁶⁵ Nevertheless, British doctrine, just as the other factors, showed clear signs of adapting to the challenges of the Afghanistan conflict towards the end of the period. From 2007 and onwards the emphasis on the distinct aspects of complex conflicts increased. By the end of that year, a temporary doctrine was issued, and by 2009 it was replaced by a new coin-doctrine that cut some of the ties to high-intensity warfare and instead explored insurgency as a challenge in its own right, including the need for integrated operations. These developments did not remedy all the problems described previously, but it illustrated the general British commitment to change its strategic behaviour between 2007 and 2008.

⁷⁶³ CGS, "Army Field Manual - Part 10, Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)," p. B-2-1.

⁷⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42; Milton, "British Defence Doctrine and the British Approach to Military Operations."

⁷⁶⁵ Marshall, "Imperial Nostalgia, the Liberal Lie, and the Perils of Postmodern Counterinsurgency," p. 248.

Conclusion

What characterised the strategic behaviour of lesser coalition states in contemporary operations?

This study set out to answer the question of what characterised the strategic behaviour of the three states of Norway, the Netherlands and the UK during the commitment to NATO's Afghanistan operations between 2003 and 2008. The case study included three lesser coalition states, all liberal parliamentary democracies, during a limited time frame involved in a unique operation, so the potential for general deductions and conclusions for the field of strategic theory are limited. However, the experiences of the three states provided specific lessons that are of interest historically and relevant to countries facing similar challenges such as that represented by the complex conflict of Afghanistan. Furthermore, their experiences provide a backdrop for a wider discussion and analysis of strategic theory in general.

Political Purposes and Aims

Strategic theory and coalitions:

The case study underscores the necessity to devote more time and effort in understanding the coalition aspects of contemporary strategy and investigating the individual states' reasoning behind joining a coalition. This study revealed that whilst all three countries were full members of the NATO alliance, involved in ISAF's operations from the outset, and used the alliance's political aims as their own; all three countries joined the coalition based on very different and diverging purposes. This meant that their strategic behaviour analysed through the four factors of this study differed significantly within the framework of the coalition and the NATO alliance.

The political purposes behind the three states' use of force in Afghanistan were not only different, but even when they were nominally identical, the three states' differed in their interpretations. The Norwegian and Dutch purpose of contributing to international peace and security through their commitment to Afghanistan was rooted in two very different ideas of what this support to international peace and security actually entailed. Norway viewed international peace and security as related to the role of the UN, whereas the Netherlands emphasised a more independent interpretation

that did not promote the United Nations to such a prominent role. Similarly, the UK and the Netherlands shared the purpose of denying Islamists access to bases on Afghan soil, but diverged when it came to what this meant. Whereas the British interpretation of counter-terrorism was on the whole compatible with that of the US, the Dutch counter-terrorism aim developed from its view of an international order which from late 2005 was explicitly contrary to that of the US. Furthermore, both the UK and Norway operated with independent aims such as the British counter-narcotics aim and the introduction of the Norwegian model for civil-military co-operation. These aims were developed for domestic rather than coalition purposes and were not always in line with the priority or the methods of the coalition.

The diverging purposes and independent aims found in these three cases were not simply of academic interest. From the purposes followed three distinctly different strategic behaviours with the ISAF coalition and the NATO alliance. The Norwegian purpose of supporting the UN meant that its organisation of civil-military co-operation went against that outlined by the two other states, and moreover against the preferred approach of ISAF. The Dutch interpretation of what supporting international peace and security entailed meant that Dutch troops could not operate alongside the remaining OEF-troops after 2006. Being that coalitions will remain significant in the international use of force and that the smaller countries will continue to bear a significant burden within international coalitions, a coalition's strategy and its effectiveness will depend on its understanding of the political reasoning behind each coalition member's participation and their respective room for manoeuvre.

Political intent and strategic logic

All three states in this study struggled to both establish and maintain a strategic logic that linked the political purpose behind its participation in the coalition and its actual use of force. None of the states explained or discussed at any length the detailed relationship between its political purposes, its political aim of establishing a centralised Afghan state, or their main objectives and how these were to be realised through the use of force. Moreover, there were no discussions in the three governments as to alternatives to that of the aim of a centralised Afghan state. It is fair to state that all three countries followed the coalition's overall aims and objectives but the three states

clearly communicated its own independent purposes and aims in other fields, thus, there were few limitations as to what could have been discussed.

The lack of an established strategic logic was most visible in Norway which defined its participation in the conflict and its responsibility in the Faryab province only in relation to its general security policies and then reiterated the coalition's aims and objectives. Although consistent during the period, Norway's twin political purposes of support to international peace and security on the one hand and support to the NATO alliance on the other, were not mutually consistent in Afghanistan as the UN's role was more limited in the conflict than the Norwegian purposes allowed for. Further, the extent and the limitations of the Norwegian purpose of honouring its NATO-obligations was never discussed or explained as Norway committed its forces to the coalition in 2005. This led to the confusing situation in 2006 and 2007 as the coalition, headed by the UK and the Netherlands, requested Norway to transfer troops from the relatively benign RC North to support the more volatile RC South, provoking intense debate within the Norwegian coalition government before deciding that Norwegian troops were only to operate within RC North. The challenge of establishing a strategic logic in the face of two incompatible purposes also became visible when Norway chose to develop its own model of civil-military organisation, arguing that it was enabling the UN while *de facto* going against the chosen ISAF model. This lack of a coherent logic based on compatible political purposes and aims meant that Norwegian troops were caught between directions from ISAF and from its own government.

The problem of establishing a strategic logic was also prevalent in the case of the UK. Just as the two other states, the UK did not discuss alternatives to the aim of a centralised state, and as argued by Strachan, a further problem of the UK was that it lacked a link between its overall defence policy, its main political aim and its use of force in Afghanistan.⁷⁶⁶ Although the UK struggled to establish a strategic logic, its main problem during the period was that of maintaining it. Whereas the two other countries maintained their political purposes and the relationships between their purposes, aims and objectives, the UK's overall purpose of denying access to Islamists in Afghanistan was set aside during the first four years of this study and only re-emerged as the operations in Helmand ran into difficulties. Instead, the UK

⁷⁶⁶ Strachan, "The Strategic Gap in British Defence Policy," p. 56.

government between 2004 and 2006 advanced the aim of reducing opium traffic as its main purpose, and let this purpose influence its strategic behaviour in Afghanistan as it played a significant part in the decision to go South as well as choosing Helmand province over other provinces. Only after it became evident in 2007 that the ambition to reduce the opium trade was incompatible with other aims and objectives was the political aim of reducing the opium trade redefined.

The case of the Netherlands initially illustrated the same problems as the two other states; its deployments to Kabul, Iraq and Baghlan in many ways struggled to establish the relationship between its political intent and its use of force, or did not discuss the relationship in any detail. This changed with the challenge of the Dutch deployment to the Uruzgan province, as the process of providing political support within the Dutch coalition government and in the Second Chamber led the government to discuss and scrutinise the assumptions and premises underlying its strategic logic in Afghanistan. A series of factors forced the Dutch government to develop a more stringent strategic logic and to develop a basic strategy for its deployment. The most important factor was that the deployment of Dutch troops to the volatile Uruzgan was politically controversial and that the Dutch government had to work hard to convince its internal and external opposition about its political intent, the need for and the direction of the use of force in Uruzgan.

The ability of the Dutch to develop a more coherent strategic logic prior to the other two states illustrates one of the main challenges of lesser coalition partners in contemporary conflicts; that of generating enough political and military involvement to carry out a strategic process in a conflict that is normally not crucial to the state's survival or national security. In relation to political involvement, this study generates an apparent paradox, that is, that the Netherlands, fraught with political instability and opposition, was able to develop a coherent, realistic and comprehensive strategy during the period, compared to the two other states whose governments were politically stable and enjoyed solid parliamentary support for its Afghanistan policies. Whereas the Dutch deployment of troops to Uruzgan in 2006 was a politically controversial decision, the British decision to deploy to Helmand or the Norwegian decision to deploy to Faryab, did not evoke similar political opposition, and both governments could rely on solid majorities across the isles on the issue of Afghanistan. In practice,

the political opposition and debate in the Netherlands was not a drawback, it rather forced the Dutch government to realistically scrutinise its underlying logic and assumptions behind its use of force in Uruzgan and engage in discussions on whether and how to use force. This is not to say that political dissent in itself was conducive to the strategic logic, but the drawn-out political and strategic process before and after the Uruzgan-deployment forced the Dutch government to solve real and practical problems pertaining to Dutch strategy.

In comparison Norway and the UK suffered from a lack of political involvement in the development of the strategy. Although there was a broad consensus about the need to participate in conflict, the Afghanistan deployment never involved vital Norwegian interests. This made it difficult to generate the political and military attention that a true strategic process requires. The Norwegian deployment to Afghanistan hence, never appeared to produce the kind of urgency that would make the development of an actual strategy necessary. Similarly, the UK's Afghanistan strategy between 2003 and 2006 was not subject to great political scrutiny as it was out-shadowed by the Iraq-conflict and domestic issues. The first four years were, just as in Norway, characterised by a lack of consistent political involvement. However, the UK government became significantly more involved in the direction of the use of force after the problems of the 2006 Helmand-deployment became evident and this political involvement did enable the development of a more coherent strategy.

This study thus illustrates the challenges of generating the political interest and involvement needed to develop a strategic logic, but it also illustrates the challenges of lesser coalition partners of maintaining a consistent strategic logic over time in a long-term complex conflict where results are vague and the pace of development is glacial at best. During the first three years of this study, when there was little political urgency surrounding the Afghanistan conflict, all three countries struggled to establish or maintain a consistent strategic logic behind its use of force. Instead the three states focused on issues that were easier to explain politically, such as humanitarian issues or issues tied to domestic politics, while paradoxically simultaneously communicating the need to understand the long-term aspects of the conflict. The interesting point was that in the cases of the UK and the Netherlands this communication of issues less relevant to the strategic logic changed once the domestic political situation and the situation on

the ground created political attention. The restructuring of British Afghanistan policy and strategy between 2007 and 2009, and the Dutch deployment discussions in 2005 and 2007 were both examples of political involvement improving the development of the strategic process, giving it direction and purpose. Therefore, this study proves that a major problem with lesser coalition partners, their role and their participation in drawn out complex conflicts is their ability to establish and maintain a strategic logic that provides political direction and purpose to the use of force. On the other hand, the remedy was equally clear. Two of the three cases demonstrate that given a sense of political urgency, either in theatre or domestically, the political involvement and direction can improve significantly.

Were the Political Purposes and Aims Adapted to the Nature of War, the Character of Complex Conflicts and Coalition Warfare?

Strategy is the realisation of political aims through the use of force. This means that abstract political ideas are to be transformed into tangible results in an environment fraught with violence, unpredictability and chance; the nature of all war and conflict. For political intent to be realised by the use of force it must at the same time provide direction to the instrument of force, but also be adaptable to the changing conditions encountered by the instrument. This balance between instrumentality and reciprocity was challenging for the three states of this study.

The question of instrumentality and providing a clear direction for the use of force was related to the states' ability to establish and maintain a strategic logic. The problem with Norway's political intent was that although it was consistently communicated during the period, its consistency did not amount to clarity. Norway's political logic was not translated into clear ideas about what Norway wanted to achieve with its forces in Afghanistan. More importantly, the political intent did not explain where, when or how its political purposes, aims and objectives were to be realised through the use of force. The Norwegian political purposes of supporting NATO and the UN could be achieved passively or actively, but this choice was never discussed. Norwegian troops were not sent to RC South in 2006 because the operations there were viewed as too aggressive, yet paradoxically, Norwegian troops repeatedly engaged the Taliban networks and took its share of casualties within its own province. The overall political purposes were not wrong in themselves, but the governments never

took their time to explain how they were to be realised. Similarly, lower down the hierarchy the political intent was never linked to the actual forces on the ground in the Faryab province. In many ways the Norwegian political intent was sound security policy, but was not sufficiently practical and detailed to provide direction for strategy. This was perhaps best illustrated by its only strategy paper during the period which did not provide any details as to when, where and how Norwegian forces were to realise the political aims. In the case of the UK, the challenge of its strategic logic in Helmand was that the central objectives of security and development were incompatible when it came to who was to carry out development within the province and how. This was gradually rectified between 2006 and 2008, but it still illustrates how the UK struggled to provide clear direction during the first years of this study. Compared to the two other states, the Dutch governments provided clearer political direction for how the use of force was to realise Dutch political intent by the time of the Uruzgan deployment. After 2005 the Balkenende-II and -IV governments were, through its use of frameworks and procedures, able to establish a strategic logic that explained where, when and how force was to be used in the Uruzgan province.

The study revealed that the lesser coalition members also struggled to adapt its political intent to the nature of war and the character of the Afghanistan conflict. The lack of adaptation, or reciprocity, was most notable with respect to adapting the countries' political intent in relation to a living adversary. The fundamental tenet of strategic thinking, namely that strategy is about realising political ambitions against an enemy who will actively and violently oppose and thwart those ambitions, did not come easily to the three states. This lack of adaptation and reciprocity was different in each state. The Norwegian governments during the period did not adapt or adjust its political purpose, aims or objectives in relation to the situation on the ground throughout the period. The Norwegian government never mentioned or acknowledged that it was confronted by a violent opposing political will, let alone used the term enemy, in its political intent or other communication. The Taliban was mentioned in relation to its pre-2001 regime but it was never dealt with as an enemy that could thwart Norwegian ambitions in Faryab. The Norwegian approach to strategy thus only looked at the instrumental or indeed aspirational side of strategy, and did not properly account for the changing nature of war and conflict and was unable to take it into account.

During the early part of the period adapting the political intent to the uncertainty of the actual conflict and allowing for reciprocity in the strategic process was also a challenge for the UK and the Netherlands. The British government and its forces did not adapt its aims and objectives to the living and reacting adversary that the Taliban represented in 2006, but instead developed its strategy based on British concerns. A similar development was noticeable in the case of the Netherlands prior to 2005, where Dutch troops were deployed to Iraq, Kabul and Baghlan without a discussion of possible adversaries and its consequences for own political ambitions. However, in contrast to Norway, both the UK and the Netherlands adapted their political aims and objectives during the period in response to changing conditions on the ground. By the end of the period the UK government was willing to adapt its policy in the field of counter-narcotics as the troops found them difficult to carry out. Further, it also took into account the various actors and their main adversary while developing its new strategies in 2008, as well as changing its policies on the balance between development and security operations. From 2005 and onwards the Dutch governments took noticeably more account of the fact that it was developing strategy in relation to a living and reacting foe than during its previous deployments. There were also clear examples of the Dutch governments adapting its strategy to the developing situation and therefore understanding strategy as a reciprocal process. Its adaptation of its reconstruction and opium aims, and its reinforcement of the civilian component of the PRT between 2005 and 2008, was markedly different from the process in Norway, and preceded that of the UK by at least a year.

In relation to the question of whether the three states' political intent was adapted to the complex conflict of Afghanistan, a similar pattern emerged. All three lesser coalition states struggled to some extent to develop strategies that took into account the dichotomous intensity level that confronted them in Afghanistan. The difference was how long it took for the three states to adapt. The case of the Netherlands showed that the political scrutiny and the drawn out process prior to its Uruzgan deployment in 2006, as well as the Dutch focus on its adversaries, resulted in its strategy taking into account that its troops faced threats along a spectrum of intensity, and the increased resistance from the Taliban in 2006 and 2007 was not seen as great surprise. This was different from the UK who were obviously caught off guard

by the level of resistance from the Taliban in 2006, but then quickly adapted to the different intensity levels in Northern and Central Helmand. Moreover, it was very different from Norway whose political aims never adapted to the increased challenge posed by the Taliban in its province after 2006 or the varying levels of intensity. A second problem of the complex conflict of Afghanistan was the challenge of multi-functionality and co-ordinating the multiple actors operating side by side in Afghanistan. On the face of it, the Norwegian political intent appeared well suited for the challenges of making strategy in this context as its independent aim of developing a Norwegian model of civilian and military co-operation set out to avoid confusion between military and civilian actors by separating them and strengthening the UN at the regional level. In practice, however, the model's lack of an integrated organisation below departmental level created confusion between the different international and Norwegian actors as to who should do what, and left the crucial question of who should carry out development in the unsafe areas of Faryab after the Taliban insurgency made the situation more violent unanswered. The UK similarly struggled to take into account the number of political actors that are the staple of coalition and complex warfare. The most significant example of this occurred in 2006 as the UK had to change its operational design and thus its strategy as it became evident that the Governor of Helmand could not live with the British strategy. Compared to the two other states, the Dutch response to the challenges of multi-functionality was better adapted to the challenges of operating in a complex conflict. From the outset the Dutch political aims appeared to see the Dutch response as a joint military and civilian response, from its initial planning through its joint execution which included a gradually increasing number of civilian advisers, culminating with a civilian head of the PRT by 2008.

The challenge of the Netherlands was to maintain political support for the long-term commitment that was required in the complex conflict of Afghanistan. The drawback of the intense political opposition in the Netherlands against the Afghanistan mission was that its commitments could not be guaranteed for more than two years at the time. A commitment that ended prematurely in 2010 with the fall of the Balkenende-IV government. Similarly, the political opposition created difficulties for the Netherlands when it came to its participation in the ISAF-coalition. In contrast to the UK and Norway, the Dutch governments were explicitly prevented from allowing

its troops to co-operate with OEF-forces after 2005, creating a difficult situation for Dutch troops which *de facto* relied on US guarantees for reinforcements within their province. On the other hand, the Dutch political and military limitations were clearly communicated and unmistakable to all other members of the coalition. More problematic was the Norwegian approach to coalition warfare, which publicly adhered to the goal of the Riga-summit of minimising national caveats, while at the same time using NATO's command and control relationship to limit its commitments to RC North, and when asked to reinforce RC South had to decline because of internal dissent in the coalition government.

The contrast between Norway and the Netherlands also illustrated that the desire to limit national caveats is a treacherous path as it attempts to disguise the fact that all coalition members join a coalition with its own objectives. By pressuring lesser coalition states to hide the political and operational limitations of their participation and pretend that they are in line with the lead nation on all accounts, the coalition sets itself up for surprises and subsequent dissent when the realities of each country's political commitment is revealed. This study indicates that it is easier for a coalition to utilise its members' strengths and avoid their weaknesses if their political limitations are clearly stated and communicated. This study also serves as a reminder that although NATO was a long standing permanent alliance, the fundamental aspects of state sovereignty and the state's prerogative of the use of force, and thus strategy, is still crucial to understanding the strategic behaviour of lesser coalition partners.

The three cases illustrated that the challenge of lesser coalition partners in adapting their political intent to complex conflicts was connected to the previous problem of generating enough interest at the political and strategic levels in order to provide continuous scrutiny and direction of the use of force. This was needed in order to continuously adapt and modify the political intent to suit the practical application of force. The necessary interest at the political and strategic levels was difficult to achieve in the cases of Norway and the UK, whereas in the case of the Netherlands, the political engagement was enabled through the intense political opposition and subsequent scrutiny. From this may be drawn two observations: firstly, political concord is paradoxically not always conducive to strategic efficiency and coherence as it does not promote scrutiny and analysis of the crucial step of transforming the political

intent into practical use of force. This is not to say that all political opposition was productive in this study and that all agreement was counterproductive, the question was whether there was sufficient political interest to analyse thoroughly the link between the political intent and use of force – or in other words develop strategy. Secondly, this indicates a fundamental challenge with lesser coalition partners who join coalitions in order to realise political ends that lie outside the immediate conflict and are not of vital interest to the state, or join coalitions to realise independent aims. These states may be unable to generate the political (and military) involvement necessary to develop a relevant strategy to the actual conflict at hand, unless a shock is provided to the system, such as the 2006 Helmand deployment provided the UK. Without a shock to its system, a lesser coalition member may do as Norway; which developed political aims not adapted to the reality of the conflict in Afghanistan and did not see the need to develop a strategy for its use of force.

The Organisation of the Strategic Process

The three cases illustrated the need for strategic theory and lead nations to take into account the political reasoning and limitations of the lesser partners in contemporary coalitions. The study also indicates that the many challenges that the three states experienced with their political intent and the development of coherent strategy could be explained by studying how the states organised their process of strategy. Furthermore, this study indicates that some of the traditional assumptions and theories concerning the organisation of the strategic process were not applicable in the context of lesser coalition partners in complex conflicts. The three cases were chosen because of their similar constitution and political culture, and the three states' choice of an integrated political and military strategic organisation. The integrated model has been perceived as instrumental to strategic effectiveness, an effect not borne out by the results of this study. The three organisations were all integrated but produced vastly different results, indicating that there is no link between an integrated organisation and the development of coherent strategy.

In all three cases the integration of the political and military levels was not carried out with increased strategic effectiveness as the main incentive. The arguments for integration were based on economic and financial efficiency and the need to manage

the armed forces efficiently, and in order to achieve this: political control. The potential strategic effect of integrating the political and military levels of strategy was mentioned by the Norwegian government as it changed its organisation in 2003, but the main emphasis was on establishing political control with its armed forces, as was the case of its British role model. In the cases of the Netherlands and the UK, development of coherent strategy was not at the forefront of the reasoning on integration; instead the emphasis was on effective management of budgets and resources. Effective management of the defence sector is a laudable aim, but the theory behind an integrated MoD was that integration of the political and military levels would lead to strategic effectiveness.⁷⁶⁷

The primary factor of an integrated strategic organisation was the integration between political intent and military expertise, but the way this was done varied significantly between the cases. In the case of Norway, the lack of detailed and practical direction of the use of force correlated with the unclear and weak role of military advice. No office or unit was charged with the task of developing strategy within the MoD, and the responsibility of the CHOD was that of senior military adviser while having no operational command of the armed forces deployed to the theatre. In addition, the number of staff officers available to generate military advice was cut by 50% as the ministry and defence headquarters was integrated, so even if the role of military advice had been clear it was uncertain whether the Norwegian military had resources or the intellectual drive to provide it. The situation was far better in the two other cases, but even though the British organisation suffered from none of the shortages in intellectual capacity or resources, it still suffered from organisational deficiencies when it came to blending military advice with the political intent within the MoD. The main challenge was the lack of involvement of the senior military advisers in the development of the practical strategy in Afghanistan and too much faith in a centralised military organisation where the unclear role of the CDS made it easier to give responsibility for the use of force in Afghanistan to the operational level. The problem in both Norway and the UK was that although the operational HQs could design relevant military plans they were unsuitable vehicles for the political integration and discussions that were needed to clarify inter-ministerial and coalition policy prior to the deployment of troops. The role of military advice was somewhat

⁷⁶⁷ Egnell, "Civil-Military Aspects of Effectiveness in Peace Support Operations," p. 35.

different in the Netherlands as it appeared to influence the strategy to a larger extent than in the two other countries. Military advice and considerations were incorporated in the political decisions and briefings given by the Dutch governments and it was discussed in greater detail. This was firstly related to the challenging political situation which required the Dutch governments to argue their case for the use of force in parliament, but it was also related to the Dutch strategic organisation which provided a clear role for its CDS. The Dutch CDS was senior military adviser to the Dutch government and partook in the policy deliberations of the Central Staff, but equally important he was in operational command of the Dutch Armed Forces and responsible for the execution of Dutch military operations. He was thus involved in the development and execution of Dutch strategy to a much larger extent than his Norwegian and British counterparts.

The second aspect of the organisation of the strategic process was the integration of the various actors needed to develop a multifunctional strategy. Once again three similarly organised organisations produced different results. The Norwegian organisation was based on principles designed to fully integrate policy in the case of an all-out war and to maintain separation between ministries in all other situations. Prior to 2007, the ministerial level had no institution to co-ordinate policies between the four main ministries involved in Afghanistan, and even after 2007 the only co-operative measure was an informal meeting at state secretarial level. This was very different from the British organisation, which had an elaborate and permanent organisation of inter-ministerial committees and sub-committees in order to co-ordinate government policy. The problem with the British organisation was that it was not properly utilised when developing strategy in Afghanistan. In both MoDs it was unclear what its responsibilities were with respect to developing a strategy for Afghanistan and both organisations seemed to delegate this task to its joint headquarters, subsequently circumventing the opportunity for a direct meeting between the political intent and the practical military concerns concerning the use of force. In both cases this was reflected in the actual operations on the ground where civil-military co-operation became a contested topic during the implementation of the British strategy and it contributed to the choice of the Norwegian model where separation rather than integration was the chosen method. The case of the Netherlands illustrated a different approach whereby the integration of the various political and military actors was tied together by an

integrated organisation, but also by a series of procedures and formats that forced political involvement and co-operation between the actors within the strategic organisation. The Dutch organisation was similarly organised to the British, but the actual integration at policy and ministerial level was ensured by a series of committees overseen by a strong Ministry of Internal Affairs, led by the Prime Minister, with the task of co-ordinating overall government policy. The integration of the Dutch strategic process was visible in that all presentations of the Dutch Uruzgan deployment were jointly chaired by three ministers. Furthermore, the organisation of the strategic process was more powerfully overseen by the Second Chamber than in the UK and Norway, which led to a holistic and elaborate discussion on the premises and assumptions of the Dutch governments. The Dutch governments were required not only to inform the Second Chamber about the deployments to Afghanistan but also to present its decisions within the format of an established framework which explored the relationship between Dutch political ends, means, ways, and how this related to the Dutch use of force. These procedures that enabled political involvement, integration between the different actors and elaborate discussion in the Dutch strategic process were codified in public documents meant to clarify ‘...the rules of the game...’ to all parties involved in the process.⁷⁶⁸

The findings of this study make it difficult to reconcile the claim of the proponents of the integrated strategic organisation that ‘...integrated civil-military structures at the strategic level provide better results in complex PSOs.’⁷⁶⁹ The three states of this study all had integrated structures, yet these organisations produced vastly different outcomes. This study did not use any non-integrated cases as control mechanisms but the significant differences in outcome between similarly integrated organisations in the different cases do seem to warrant the claim that there is not a strong correlation between strategic effectiveness or coherence, and an integrated structure such as the MoDs of this study. Whilst this study does not support the claim that an integrated MoD in itself produces strategic coherence or efficiency, the prime example being Norway, the study does support the link between strategic coherence and efficiency on the one hand and a generally integrated approach to civil-military relations on the other. The case of the Netherlands illustrated the benefits of an integrated and holistic approach to the development of government policy, strategy, as

⁷⁶⁸ Netherlands Ministry of Defence, "Introduction Bundle," p. 8.

⁷⁶⁹ Egnell, "Civil-Military Aspects of Effectiveness in Peace Support Operations," p. 35.

well as operations. Whilst the proponents of an integrated organisation such as an MoD operated from the premise that an integrated structure would adopt an integrated or comprehensive approach to the development of strategy, the cases of the UK prior to 2006 and Norway illustrates that the right structure does not guarantee a right approach. In the UK the lack of an integrated approach was caused by neglect and inter-ministerial disagreement, but in Norway the government deliberately opted against mechanisms to integrate policy, discouraged development of military advice, and developed its own segregated model for operations. This study therefore suggests that there has been an over-emphasis on the choice of structures rather than on how strategic organisations actually operate and the level of integration and co-operation in a state's civil-military relations in general.

The three cases indicate that focus on the organisation of the strategic process was crucial to ensure political involvement, co-ordinate the development of policy, ensure the meeting between politicians, bureaucrats and military, as well as to co-ordinate the various actors on the ground. The traditional approach in strategic theory and civil-military relations has been to focus on institutions and structures as the '....default mechanism....' in order ensure proper organisation of the strategic process.⁷⁷⁰ This study suggests that this focus on structures and institutions was not as relevant to the three cases as the traditional theories claims. The theories of strategic organisation and civil-military relations are based on different foundations than was the case in this study. Most of the theory of strategic organisation and civil-military relations is founded on the empirical evidence from large existential conflicts which naturally generate political interest, and not the complex contemporary conflicts. The theory is also dominated by empirical evidence from large powers such as the US and not adapted to contemporary parliamentary democracies. Furthermore, the theories of existing civil-military relations appear to presuppose the presence of experienced statesmen, officers and bureaucrats with an extensive background in the fields of security or defence. Both Strachan and Cohen based their criticism of contemporary politicians and generals on studies of 'statesmen and generals', using empirical evidence from the days of Churchill, Clemenceau and Ben-Gurion, all of whom had a lifetime of war and politics to draw on before they were charged with developing strategy.⁷⁷¹ The realities of the three cases of this study was that experienced statesmen and politicians

⁷⁷⁰ Strachan, "Making Strategy: Civil-Military Relations after Iraq," p. 76.

⁷⁷¹ Cohen, *Supreme Command*.

were far and few between when it came to directing the practical aspects of strategy. The average time in office for British defence ministers between 2005 and 2011 was little over a year. During the period of this study Britain went through four different ministers, all career politicians, none of whom had much experience in defence or security matters. This meant that although the UK went through only two Prime Ministers during the same time, there was a lack of continuity and experience on the political side of the strategic organisation. In the two other cases, the turnover was less noticeable, but none of the ministers of defence of the Netherlands or Norway had any previous experience with security policy, strategy or directing the use of force. Instead, the ministers in the study embodied more of the 'dialogue of unequals' and the 'unequal dialogue' than Cohen argued. The ministers were professional politicians, politically experienced and well educated and often with a broad political background from various fields, but inexperienced in the fields of war and conflict. This high turnover and lack of specific expertise is nothing to lament over but must be understood as the reality of contemporary strategy, and thus that the theories of strategy and civil-military relations must reflect this reality instead of clinging to past ideals.

This study indicates that the Netherlands was better able than the two other cases to adapt its organisation and structures and to generate and utilise military advice in relation to the realities of contemporary strategy. It appears that having a good organisation is no longer enough; the organisation of the process of strategy must be welded together by written procedures and doctrines that explain the 'rules of the game' and how a chosen country makes strategy to the novices of the strategic process. Procedures are essential to account for the challenges of political involvement, to adapt the political intent to the realities of complex conflicts, and to take into account the challenges of organising the process of developing strategy involving a large number of inexperienced and disparate actors.

Strategic Outlook

In addition to the organisation of the strategic process, the three states' prevailing beliefs, assumptions, and theories concerning the use of force also helps understand their strategic behaviour. The three states' understanding of force and strategy differed significantly. In the case of the UK, between 2003 and 2006 the British strategic

decision makers expressed an optimistic and positive view of the utility of force and the utility of its armed forces. Coming off the successes of Kosovo, Sierra Leone and the early deployments to Afghanistan, the British government expressed a view of force that relied heavily on the use of military force compared to other tools available. It was positive that its armed forces were up to the task of succeeding in future complex conflicts and that Britain was capable of using force without relying on the international society. The corresponding Dutch understanding of force, although not as optimistic and positive, expressed a similar belief in the utility of force in international society and that force might have to be used outside UN auspices. The Norwegian perspective of force was strikingly different as both governments argued strongly for the use of force only as a last resort and after 2005 made its use of force contingent on UN-support. In contrast to the UK, the Norwegian government did not see the utility of its armed forces, instead arguing for the utility of other tools and actors. Paradoxically, the British and Norwegian beliefs seem to explain their strategic challenges in their respective areas. The British belief in the utility of force seems to explain their almost cavalier approach to the conflict prior to 2006 and the challenges of co-ordinating the various actors in London and on the ground in Helmand. The Norwegian lack of belief in the use of force explains the unwillingness to link actual forces to the actual challenges of the Faryab province and to provide detailed directions for the use of force.

The picture of British strategic behaviour and outlook would not be complete without also noticing the significant changes between 2006 and 2009. British strategic behaviour was on the receiving end of severe criticism, but it appears that the criticism did not always take into account the significant developments during the latter part of the period. One of the most significant developments were the changes in the British understanding of the term strategy and what it entailed. The three cases illustrate the challenges of lesser coalition states with respect to understanding and defining strategy, and the effect this had on their strategic behaviour. In practice, all three states suffered from the lack of a precise definition of strategy as their understanding did not clearly distinguish politics from strategy. The term strategy seemed to describe any activity made to achieve a goal, and any activity carried out at the strategic level, however mundane. This lack of precision noted by Michael Howard was clearly evident and helps explain the challenges that the three states faced when it came to developing

political aims and adapting them to the practical challenges of complex conflicts, as well as designing relevant organisations. The lack of precision when discussing strategy appeared to be related to the choice of the grand strategy perspective, which was the preferred perspective of all three states at the beginning of the period. Particularly the Norwegian and British views of strategy made, as pointed out by Strachan, politics and strategy virtually indistinguishable. This meant that strategy became a mere reiteration of political aims, and the practical implications of strategy received scant attention; the when, where and how of strategy was relegated to the operational level which was to realise policy through the much desired joint approach. The view of strategy before 2006 thus helps explain why the governments of Norway and Britain did not involve itself in the practicalities of the use of force; it was their understanding of strategy.

The choice of the grand strategy perspective was explained by the need to co-ordinate the various policy fields of the governments. The problem was that in the cases of Norway and the UK prior to 2006, this organisation of this co-ordination was wanting, either by choice or neglect. The Clausewitzian perspective, which emphasises the links between politics and the use of force and its relationship to the nature of war, was less prominent than the grand strategy perspective initially. However, in the cases of the Netherlands and the UK the understanding of strategy gradually moved towards a more Clausewitzian perspective as both states sought to ameliorate the shortcomings of the grand strategy perspective with respect to distinguishing policy from strategy, as well as adapting their political intent to the volatile situation in the theatre. In the Dutch case, the 2005 NDD displayed a clear understanding of strategy as distinct from policy, but equally important the political scrutiny after 2005 forced the strategic organisation to explain in detail the use of Dutch force and relate it to the conditions on the ground. The British view of strategy shifted to a much more practical and reciprocal approach after 2007, where strategy was no longer seen as a reiteration of policy but instead ‘...the ways and means required to achieve stipulated ends, conditioned by the environment and prospective opponents.’⁷⁷² Whilst there were no attempts in Norway to clarify or discuss its chosen understanding of strategy, the cases of Britain and the Netherlands after 2006 were clear attempts to employ the best of both strategic perspectives by focusing on the co-ordination of policy and various

⁷⁷² DCDC, "British Defence Doctrine," p. 1-4.

actors, while simultaneously focusing on the actual use of force on the ground and how it related to the changing situation on the ground.

Finally, the study illustrates the challenges of the lesser coalition partners with respect to the development of doctrines guiding the actual use of force. The study showed clearly that updated, relevant and conflict-specific military doctrines made development of relevant and coherent strategies easier. In the case of Norway, there were no PSO- or COIN- doctrines at all as all doctrine development during the period was concentrated on high-intensity concepts such as manoeuvre warfare, EBO, and NCW. The lack of relevant doctrines helps explain the weakness of Norwegian military advice and the lack of strategic and operational alternatives, but it also explains the lack of detailed directions to Norwegian troops from the political level and downwards. Although the British armed forces operated on a comprehensive doctrinal platform, second in scope only to the US, it also suffered from a similar over-emphasis on high-intensity doctrines as did Norway. The British armed forces spearheaded the development of new warfighting concepts such as EBA and NEC. The problem with this emphasis on warfighting and its corresponding ethos was that the doctrines and ideas more relevant to complex wars were neglected, apparently based on the mistaken belief that British forces already had a ‘....unique insight....’ into such conflicts.⁷⁷³ While countries such as the USA and the Netherlands were developing its doctrines between 2003 and 2006 to cope with insurgencies, the UK did not update its doctrines until after 2007. In contrast to the two other states, the Netherlands entered into the period with a comprehensive doctrinal framework and an updated set of doctrines in the fields of COIN and PSO. The doctrines of the Netherlands’ armed forces were developed specifically for the Dutch political and legal settings which made the existing doctrines updated and easily compatible with Dutch political intent, making the military advice provided in the development of Dutch strategy more relevant than in the other two countries. The study thus suggests that efforts spent on ensuring that relevant, updated and conflict specific doctrines exist for the use of force do have an effect on the ability to produce relevant military advice and a coherent strategy.

The findings of this study indicate that there is a clear link between a state’s strategic outlook and its strategic behaviour, but also that a state’s strategic outlook may

⁷⁷³ CGS, "Army Field Manual - Part 10, Counter Insurgency Operations (Strategic and Operational Guidelines)," B-2-1.

change and adapt quickly as events unfold. The case of the UK between 2006 and 2008 displayed how in a short period of time the UK's strategic leadership showed an impressive commitment to changing its perceptions of the utility of force and strategy. Although the changes far from rectified the initial problems created in 2006, the British changes in political intent, adaptation, organisation and strategic outlook significantly changed the UK's strategic behaviour towards a more coherent strategy.

Final Words

*"The men that fought at Minden, they was rookies in their time....."*⁷⁷⁴
Rudyard Kipling

The premise of this study was that the use of coalitions and alliances in future international operations will continue unabated or even increase. This will make the importance of the contributions from the lesser coalition partners vital. This study illustrates the need for coalitions, lead nations and other coalition members to realistically understand each individual member's strategic behaviour in order to make it contribute effectively.

The study suggests that in some fields, strategic theory needs to adopt a more realistic and less idealistic approach to contemporary strategy. To a larger degree than today, strategic theory must include the coalition perspective in its discussions and view coalitions from a perspective of utility rather than vulnerability as is the tendency in much of the classic literature on strategy. Furthermore, strategic theory must not treat the political limitations of each coalition member as something that may be wished away, but rather accept and explore it so that each coalition member's scope of participation may be understood and utilised. The question of idealism also arises when it comes to the understanding of who are the makers of modern strategy in lesser coalition states. The soldiers and statesmen meeting to develop strategy are not the experienced statesmen and officers of the existential conflicts of the 20th century that is so often the preferred choice of strategic theorists. Strategy and civil-military relations are conducted more than ever by inexperienced career politicians and technocratic officers who have never had a 'whiff of cordite'. Theories on the development of strategy and civil-military relations must take this as their starting point and look

⁷⁷⁴ Rudyard Kipling, *Barrack-Room Ballads* (London: NuVision, 2008), p. 59.

towards the development of organisations and procedures rather than lamenting about the current state of affairs.

This study indicates that lesser coalition partners are able to develop coherent strategies when their strategic behaviour and attention is directed towards achieving the goals of the coalition. However, the study also reveals the challenges of lesser coalition states in generating political interest and involvement, adapt its political intent, strategic organisation and strategic outlook to the actual complex conflict at hand, when the coalition member's rationale for the use of force is not directly related to the actual conflict. A fundamental challenge for coalition strategy and effectiveness is thus to identify a coalition member's true political scope and limitations and realistically gauge a members' abilities when it comes to developing strategy.

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